A Common Vision for Transforming the Paper Industry: Striving for Environmental and Social Sustainability

Drafted by the Alliance for Environmental Innovation, Center for a New American Dream, Conservatree, Co-op America, Dogwood Alliance, ForestEthics, the Green Press Initiative, the Markets Initiative, Natural Resources Defense Council, the Recycled Products Purchasing Cooperative

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An Urgent Problem

Pulp and paper production, consumption and wasting have many negative environmental and social impacts. The pulp and paper industry is among the world's largest generators of air and water pollutants, waste products, and the gases that cause climate change. It is also one of the largest users of raw materials, including fresh water, energy, and forest fibers. Forests that are essential for clean air and water, wildlife habitat, climate protection, spirituality, recreation and indigenous peoples' cultural survival—including old-growth and other ecologically important forests—are being logged for fiber; in many places they also are being cleared for replacement by plantations that have reduced ecological value and employ toxic chemical herbicides and fertilizers. The pulp and paper industry also has negative impacts on the health, well-being and stability of local communities. In North America the majority of paper products are buried in landfills or burned in incinerators, resulting in substantial pollution, forest destruction and major climate change impacts.

Industrialized nations, with 20 percent of the world's population, consume 87 percent of the world's printing and writing papers.[1] Global production in the pulp, paper and publishing sector is expected to increase by 77% from 1995 to 2020.[2] While paper and paper products yield many benefits, due to society's growing demand for paper and the industry's unacceptably large ecological footprint on the planet, it is necessary to transform global paper production and consumption towards processes that are ecologically and socially responsible and sustainable.

Goals For Transforming Paper Production and Consumption Toward Environmental and Social Sustainability

We, the undersigned, call upon the paper industry to adopt the 'Precautionary Principle' with regard to the use of natural resources and chemicals throughout the production process and to refrain from activities that could potentially cause irreparable harm to human health and the environment. Communities' rights to a healthy environment, workers' rights to beneficial employment, and indigenous peoples' rights to control their traditional lands and protect their cultural identity are fundamental. Industry has a responsibility to respect these rights. We are committed to achieving the following goals and call upon pulp and paper manufacturers, suppliers, and purchasers, as well as governments to accomplish these goals in pursuit of an environmentally and socially sustainable paper production and consumption system.

Minimize Paper Consumption:

- Eliminate excessive and unnecessary paper consumption

Clean Production:

- Minimize the combined impacts of water, energy, wood, and chemical usage, as well as air, water, solid waste, and thermal pollution across the entire paper production system including: fiber

Originally printed on 100% postconsumer recycled paper, processed chlorine free (PCF)

1 Klaus Toepfer, Executive Director, United Nations Environment Programme, Keynote Address UNEP's 7th International High Level Seminar on Cleaner Production, 29-30 April 2002.
2 OECD Environmental Outlook (Paris: OECD, 2001), p. 215

production/sourcing, pulping, production, transportation, use, and disposal.
- Eliminate harmful pulp and paper mill discharges and the use of chlorine and chlorine compounds for bleaching.

Responsible Fiber Sourcing:
- End the use of wood fiber that threatens endangered forests. (Some forests are so rare, threatened, or ecologically vulnerable, or are of such global biological or cultural importance that any logging or commercial use could irreparably damage their conservation value.)[3]
- End the clearing of natural forest ecosystems and their conversion into plantations for paper fiber.
- Source any remaining virgin wood fibers for paper from independent, third–party certified forest managers that employ the most environmentally and socially responsible forest management and restoration practices. (Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only acceptable international certification program that comes close to meeting this goal.)
- Use alternative crops for paper if comprehensive and credible analysis indicates that they are environmentally and socially preferable to other virgin fiber sources.
- Eliminate widespread industrial use of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers in plantations and fiber production.
- Stop the introduction of paper fiber from genetically modified organisms, particularly transgenic trees and plants with genes inserted from other species of animals and plants.

Maximize Recycled Content:
- Eliminate paper manufactured solely of virgin fiber and fundamentally reduce reliance on virgin tree fibers.
- Maximize post-consumer recycled fiber content in *all* paper and paper products.
- Increase the use of other recovered materials (e.g., agricultural residues and pre-consumer recycled) as a fiber source in paper.

Specific implementation guidance for these goals is detailed within the attached document, *Guidance to Best Practices For Advancing Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Papers.*

Working Together Toward a Solution

We, the undersigned, come together to pursue informed and realistic goals for positively transforming paper production and consumption. We are committed to working together in a variety of campaigns to achieve this transformation. We recognize the unique role that each organization plays in moving paper producers and consumers toward environmental and social sustainability and we agree to support both individual campaigns and the collective effort. We agree to work together and with manufacturers, governments, suppliers, and purchasers to accomplish the above goals for creating a more environmentally and socially responsible system of paper production and consumption.

Signed this 20th day of November 2002, Environmental Paper Summit, Sonoma County, California:

3 See “Wye River” discussion document "Endangered Forests: High Conservation Value Forests Protection– Guidance for Corporate Commitments" for additional details.

Guidance to Best Practices For Advancing Environmentally and Socially Sustainable Papers

(Referenced in "A Common Vision for Transforming the Paper Industry")
November 2002

This document provides guidance to pulp and paper manufacturers, suppliers, and purchasers, as well as governments, on actions necessary in order for each sector to advance environmentally and socially sustainable paper production and consumption. Each sector has an essential role to play in advancing responsible paper and paper products (hereinafter referred to as "papers").

There are two parts to this *Guidance*. The first part provides parameters and directions for specific sectors. The second part, entitled *Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance,* contains more detailed targets and recommendations for purchasers specifically because of their critical role in driving demand for responsible papers and spurring market development. The entire *Guidance* document is intended to be dynamic and change as markets and technology change, and as we progress towards our goals.

Working With Manufacturers: Transforming Fiber Sourcing and Production Processes

We call upon manufacturers to establish timelines and implement actions that will meet the following objectives:

Clean Production:
1. Minimize the combined impacts of water, energy, wood, and chemical usage, as well as air, water, solid waste, and thermal pollution across the entire paper production system including: fiber production/sourcing, pulping, production, transportation, use, and disposal.

2. Minimize and over time eliminate harmful pulp mill discharges and the use of chlorine and chlorine compounds for bleaching. In existing mills, this can be accomplished through introduction of advanced pulping and bleaching technologies (e.g., extended and oxygen-based delignification, maximal effluent recovery and the use of nonchlorine-based bleaching chemicals). Design all newly-constructed mills to utilize these advanced chlorine-free pulping and bleaching technologies in order to achieve effluent-free mills.

Responsible Fiber Sourcing:
3. End the use of wood fiber that threatens endangered forests. Some forests are so rare, threatened, or ecologically vulnerable, or are of such global biological or cultural importance that any logging or commercial use could irreparably damage their conservation value. (See the document *"Endangered Forests: Priority High Conservation Value Forests for Protection – Guidance for Corporate Commitments"* for additional detail.)

4. End the clearing of natural forest ecosystems and their conversion into plantations for paper fiber.

5. Source any remaining virgin tree fibers from independent, third–party certified forest managers that employ the most environmentally and socially responsible forest management and restoration practices. (Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only acceptable international certification program that comes close to meeting this.)

6. Use alternative crops (e.g., hemp, kenaf) for fibers if Life Cycle Analysis and other comprehensive and credible analysis indicate that they are environmentally and socially preferable to other sources of virgin fiber.

7. Eliminate widespread industrial use of chemical pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers in plantations and fiber production.

8. Stop the introduction of paper fiber from genetically modified organisms, particularly transgenic trees and plants with genes inserted from other species of animals and plants.

9. Implement "chain-of-custody" research and tracking systems to identify the origin of fiber supplies, as well as mechanisms to report results meaningfully.

Maximize Recycled Content:
10. Eliminate production of papers manufactured solely of virgin fiber and fundamentally reduce reliance on virgin tree fibers.

11. Maximize post-consumer fiber content in *all* paper and paper products.

12. Increase use of other recovered materials (e.g., agricultural residues and preconsumer recycled) as a paper fiber source.

Social Benefits and Outreach:
13. Ensure that paper production contributes to healthy communities in developing and developed countries (e.g., as it relates to poverty alleviation, social services, jobs, community stability, and worker rights, health and benefits).

14. Promote environmentally preferable papers positively to customers and throughout the distribution chain.

Working With Governments: Supporting Sustainable Paper Production and Consumption

We call upon federal, state, and local governments to establish timelines and implement actions to meet the following objectives:

Incentives, Subsidies, Policies, and Planning:
1. Eliminate subsidies and incentives for virgin pulp and paper production (including road building and tax breaks) and require producers to cover the true social and environmental costs associated with the industry.

2. Promote and enhance the functioning of paper recycling as an entire system, whereby the collection of materials meets the needs of manufacturers to produce high quality recycled paper products, which are, in turn, reusable or recyclable. Facilitate the increased collection of high quality postconsumer paper and other postconsumer materials for use as fiber by the paper industry.

3. Purchase products consistent with the attached *Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance* in order to advance environmentally and socially responsible papers.

4. Develop incentives for environmentally and socially responsible paper product technology, research and development, and production.

5. Develop, implement and enforce policies that work to eliminate unsustainable industrial forestry practices (e.g.,large-scale clearcutting, conversion of forests to plantations, wide-spread use of agricultural chemicals) and encourage good forestry practices.

6. Work with environmental and conservation experts to establish scientifically-based regional forest conservation and restoration plans in order to determine forest areas needed for wilderness, biodiversity, and recreational protection and those appropriate for fiber and timber production. In the U.S., ensure the protection of federal forestlands.

Working With Suppliers: Providing Environmentally Preferred Paper

We call upon suppliers to establish timelines and implement actions to meet the following objectives:

Responsible Supplies:
1. Eliminate paper supplies that do not meet the minimum standards of the attached *Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance.*

2. Promote environmentally preferable papers positively to customers and encourage manufacturers to produce them. Feature and promote environmentally preferable papers in stores, catalogues, and marketing displays and materials.

Working With Purchasers: Creating Demand for Sustainably Produced Paper

We call upon all purchasers to establish timelines and implement actions to meet the following objectives:

Responsible Demand:
1. Purchase products from manufacturers and suppliers that advance the goals and actions specified above for environmentally and socially responsible papers.

2. Advance environmentally and socially sustainable papers by purchasing products consistent with the attached *Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance.*

Environmentally Preferable Paper Purchasing Guidance

November 2002

Purchasers can influence the paper production process through the paper attributes that they demand, as well as through the products that they specify or reject. Consumer demand has long been an important driver in the development of environmentally preferable papers and in influencing the technologies and investments necessary to make them. In order to most effectively harness purchasers' power to steer the paper industry toward more sustainable production methods, we advocate that paper purchasers implement the following guidance.

Make a Commitment:

- ❑ Develop an organizational policy commitment to purchase paper with increasingly enhanced environmental characteristics as specified in these guidelines, and set a timetable for the transition. Communicate the commitment to managers and staff, suppliers, customers, partners, and the public.

Minimize Paper Consumption:

- ❑ Eliminate excessive and unnecessary paper consumption. Visit www.forestethics.org/reduction for paper reduction strategies. Examples include:
  - Purchasing copiers, printers, and fax machines that can be set to default to double-sided printing.
  - Maximizing paper use efficiency in business and other settings.
  - Rethinking design processes to minimize printing and copying waste.
  - Minimizing unsolicited mail, both sent and received.
  - Minimizing overruns and maximizing sell-through for published materials.

Maximize Recycled Content:

- ❑ Eliminate the use of paper and paper products (including newsprint, packaging, tissue products, office papers, and publications) made from 100 percent virgin fiber content.
- ❑ Switch to paper that contains the highest postconsumer recycled content feasible for each specific need, but no less than the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) minimums for federal agencies. Currently the EPA minimums for printing and writing papers, for example, are 30 percent for uncoated papers and 10 percent for coated papers.
- ❑ After switching to recycled paper, set a timeline for increasing the postconsumer content as quickly as possible to higher percentages. For printing and writing papers, this should be no less than 50 percent for uncoated papers and 30 percent for coated papers. Notify suppliers that papers with these contents or higher are expected.
- ❑ **After maximizing postconsumer recycled content,** give preference to paper products that also contain other recovered materials (e.g., agricultural residues, preconsumer fiber).

Be Selective about Virgin Fiber Content:

- ❑ **Supply Origin:** Verify with suppliers and manufacturers the source of any virgin fiber content in paper and give preference to suppliers and manufacturers that establish a credible "Chain of Custody" tracking system to reliably identify the origin of fiber sources.
- ❑ **Endangered Forests:** Give preference to papers guaranteed to be free of fiber that threatens endangered forests. (Some forests are so rare, threatened, or ecologically vulnerable, or are of such

global biological or cultural importance that any logging or commercial use could irreparably damage their conservation value.) End the use of any paper with fiber content known to threaten endangered forests. Environmental groups are compiling information on endangered forests and making it more widely available.

- For information on endangered forests and implementation see the discussion document *"Endangered Forests: High Conservation Value Forests Protection — Guidance for Corporate Commitments."*

❑ **Forest Conversion to Plantations:** Give preference to papers that can be guaranteed to be free of fibers from the conversion of diverse natural forest ecosystems into plantations.[4] End the use of any paper with fiber content known to come from recent or ongoing conversions of natural forests to plantations.

❑ **FSC Certification:** Give preference to papers with a remaining virgin tree fiber content that comes from independent, third-party certified forest managers that employ the most environmentally and socially responsible forest management and restoration practices. Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is the only acceptable international certification program that comes close to meeting this guidance. (NOTE: FSC supply is not always available, but it will become increasingly available over time if requested.)

For more information see:

- www.fscus.org and www.fscoax.org (FSC US and international web sites)
- www.certifiedwood.org (certified wood supply database and tracking services)
- www.forestworld.com (certified wood supply database and tracking services)
- web sites of certifiers specified on FSC web sites

❑ **Alternative Fibers:** Give preference to papers made from alternative fiber crops (e.g., hemp, kenaf) if Life Cycle Analysis and other comprehensive and credible analysis indicates that alternative fibers are environmentally and socially preferable to other sources of virgin fiber.

❑ **Genetically Modified Organisms:** Do not buy papers with fiber content known to come from transgenically modified trees and plants that have genes of other animals and plants inserted.

Give Preference to Chlorine-Free Papers:

❑ Give preference to papers processed without chlorine or chlorine compounds (i.e., "processed chlorine free" or PCF papers), as long as they also meet recycled content goals. (NOTE: Papers processed without chlorine or chlorine compounds are not always available, but will become increasingly available over time if requested. For more information on pulping and bleaching technologies see the attached "Hierarchy of Pulping and Bleaching Processes.")

Spread the Word:

❑ Print on documents an accurate description of the attributes of the environmentally preferable papers used, in order to raise awareness and accountability.

4 This guidance supports FSC's criteria specifying November 1994 as the cut off date for no more conversion of natural forests to plantations. Wood from forests converted to plantations after November 1994 is unacceptable unless the plantations are being restored to natural forests.

ATTACHMENT

Hierarchy of Pulping and Bleaching Processes

Process	**How It Works**
Processed Chlorine Free (PCF) & Totally Chlorine Free (TCF)*	Completely substitutes oxygen-based compounds for chlorine compounds.
Enhanced ECF with ozone or hydrogen peroxide	Uses ozone or hydrogen peroxide as brightening agent in initial stages of bleaching processes. (Final or near final stage uses chlorine dioxide.)
ECF with extended or oxygen delignification ("enhanced ECF')	Removes more of the lignin before bleaching, thus reducing energy and chemical use during bleaching process. (Final stage uses chlorine dioxide.)
Elemental Chlorine Free ("traditional ECF")	Replaces elemental chlorine with chlorine dioxide.
Elemental Chlorine	Uses elemental chlorine to bleach pulp. In the U.S. elemental chlorine was phased out as of April 2001 per EPA's Cluster Rule.

* The terms PCF and TCF refer to paper produced without chlorine or chlorine compounds. As used in the market today, PCF paper is preferable because it contains recycled fiber, while TCF refers only to 100% virgin paper.