

My name is Bev Stables and I'm writing on behalf of the Colorado Municipal League and our 271 member municipalities. I'm testifying in opposition to House Bill 1051.

CML supported House Bill 21-1162, the Plastic Pollution Reduction Act, which established the 10-cent fee for recycled paper carryout bags, with 60% of the bag fee revenues going to local governments.

Many of our municipalities have benefited from this fee: the city of Durango has found the fee to be extremely valuable in funding their waste management activities; the city of Salida has a sustainability committee that works to utilize funds they receive from bag fees; and the city of Lafayette, that did not have a bag fee previously, now has dedicated zero waste funding through the fee revenue.

Other municipalities like Denver, Aspen, and Boulder have found that many residents now bring their own reusable bags when they shop; showing that the bag fees have led to changes in behavior that dramatically reduce waste.

If House Bill 1051 passes and this fee goes away, home rule municipalities would be able to re-implement the fee if they choose. However, and this is an important caveat, statutory municipalities do not have the same authority and would permanently forgo this revenue source.

I also want to note that some of our members are concerned about the removal of this fee causing somewhat of a "policy whiplash" for their communities. After educating residents and local businesses on the 2021 Plastic Pollution Reduction Act over the past few years, House Bill 1051 would undue that work and cause confusion.

Please keep this fee in place and allow municipalities across Colorado to continue their waste reduction efforts. I urge you to vote no on House Bill 1051. Thank you.



American Forest & Paper Association

February 6, 2025

The Honorable Alex Valdez
Chair, House Energy & Environment Committee
200 East Colfax, Room 271
Denver, CO 80203

RE: Support for House Bill 1051 – Concerning repealing the requirement that retail establishments charge a fee for providing recycled paper carryout bags.

Dear Committee Chair Valdez, Vice Chair Velasco, and Members of the House Energy & Environment Committee,

The American Forest & Paper Association (AF&PA) respectfully supports [House Bill 1051](#), which removes the requirement that retail establishments charge a fee for providing recycled paper carryout bags, on behalf of our members and their employees who are an integral part of the circular economy.

Introduction to AF&PA

AF&PA serves to advance U.S. paper and wood products manufacturers through fact-based public policy and marketplace advocacy. The forest products industry is circular by nature. AF&PA member companies make essential products from renewable and recyclable resources, generate renewable bioenergy and are committed to continuous improvement through the industry's sustainability initiative — [Better Practices, Better Planet 2030: Sustainable Products for a Sustainable Future](#). The forest products industry accounts for approximately five percent of the total U.S. manufacturing GDP, manufactures about \$350 billion in products annually and employs about 925,000 people. The industry meets a payroll of approximately \$65 billion annually and is among the top 10 manufacturing sector employers in 43 states.

In Colorado, the industry employs more than 6,500 individuals, with an annual payroll of over \$386 million. The estimated state and local taxes paid by the forest products industry totals \$28 million annually.¹

Paper Recycling Works

Paper recycling is an environmental success story. Paper is one of the most widely recycled materials in America, and paper recycling rates in the U.S. have consistently increased in recent decades. The paper industry recycles nearly 60% more paper today than it did in 1990, when the industry set its first recycling rate goal.

¹ Data sources: U.S. government, AF&PA, and Fastmarkets RISI. Figures are the most recent available as of December 2022.

In calendar year 2023, U.S. pulp, paper and paperboard mills consumed 31.3 million tons of recovered paper to manufacture new products, and the U.S. exported another 14.8 million tons for use in manufacturing new pulp, paper and paperboard around the world.

Additionally, the paper industry is working to capture even more paper from the waste stream for recycling. Since 2019, our industry has announced or is expected to complete projects by 2025 that will use more than 9 million tons of recycled paper. These projects include building new mills, converting or expanding existing mills, and updating machinery and equipment.

Our Commitment to Utilizing Recycled Paper in Manufacturing

The paper and packaging sector's environmental success story is due to strong and free markets for our recyclable materials. Recycled fiber content is a high-value, global commodity that fosters a dynamic marketplace where recovered fiber finds its highest end-use in the creation of new products. This creates a virtuous cycle which encourages more paper recycling and recovery. Rather than drive increased use of recyclable paper, fees on paper packaging drive a shift away from paper to other products where it is less efficiently used. By contrast, the market-driven recycling system is already recovering and recycling record amounts of paper. Legislation that imposes fees on paper packaging is unnecessary and contrary to the State's stated environmental goals, particularly given the environmental benefits of paper and the recovered fiber sector.

Impacts of Bag Fees

Offering bags and containers at the point of purchase is a natural part of customer service. Many services are included in the price of the goods consumers already buy, such as rent, electricity, insurance and employee wages. Government taxes imposed on products increase costs for consumers who can least afford it-and can create distortions in the free flow of recyclable commodities like paper. Taxes and fees burden hard working citizens by increasing the costs of basic necessities for all and disproportionately impacting fixed- and low-income consumers. These consumers can ill afford to pay an additional tax on paper bags while struggling to cover increasing costs of essential products, and they need affordable packaging options to protect their food purchases from damage and contamination. Paper bags are a clean, hygienic, and convenient choice to meet those needs while also being recyclable, reusable, and compostable.

Impact of Extended Producer Responsibility

Considering the impact of bag fees on consumer, the removal of the paper bag fee under HB 1051 makes even more sense when considering Colorado's impending extended producer responsibility (EPR) program for paper packaging and products. Under HB 1355 (2022), paper bags are a covered product under the definition of "packaging material." This will require obligated producers to pay an additional fee on paper bags for recovery and recycling costs. These impending financial burdens stand to increase the cost of consumer goods, amplifying any additional fee on paper bags at checkout. AF&PA supports HB 1051 to ensure both a uniform landscape for all materials under Colorado's EPR program and that products consumers rely on remain affordable.

We encourage Colorado to promote measures which support paper and paper-based products. We stand ready to assist you and offer our expertise as a resource as you continue the dialogue on this

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important issue. Please direct any question regarding this matter to Frazier Willman, AF&PA's Manager of Government Affairs at Frazier_Willman@afandpa.org.

House Energy & Environment

02/06/2025 01:30 PM

HB25-1051 Repeal Recycled Paper Carryout Bag Fee

Typed Text of Testimony Submitted

Name, Position, Representing	Typed Text of Testimony
mark kaiser For themselves	<p>In recent years, the shift towards sustainable living has brought reusable grocery bags into the spotlight. These bags, made from various materials such as cloth, jute, and recycled plastics, are lauded for their environmental benefits. Despite these advantages, there is a lesser-known side to their usage that warrants attention—the potential for bacterial contamination.</p> <p>Reusable grocery bags have become a symbol of environmental consciousness, reducing the reliance on single-use plastic bags and promoting sustainability. However, beneath their eco-friendly facade lies a hidden concern: the potential for harboring bacteria and germs. This raises questions about whether the benefits to the "Greener Environment" outweigh the potential health risks associated with their repeated use.</p> <p>Researchers tested 84 reusable grocery bags to determine the presence of bacteria. The findings were alarming, revealing that a significant amount of bacteria was present in almost all but one of the bags tested. Specifically, coliform bacteria, which suggests raw meat or uncooked food contamination, was found in at least 50% of the tested bags. Furthermore, the infamous E. coli bacteria was detected in 12% of the shopping bags. These results highlight the potential health risks associated with using reusable grocery bags without proper cleaning and maintenance.</p> <p>Mark Kaiser Registered Volunteer Lobbyist</p>
Missy Espinoza For themselves	<p>This bill should be repealed because it is an additional cost you are have FORCED onto the citizens. The bag is basically single use and it takes just as much (maybe more from what I read) to produce. You need to STOP adding more costs and inconveniences to the lives of the People of Colorado. I'm tired of being poor. And part of what keeps me poor is the taxes and fees that are taken from me. I made over 50 thousand in 2024 before taxes working six days a week, with no paid days off or vacations... but, after taxes? I was barely able to pay my bills and feed myself. And the NOT ELECTED Lorena Garcia thinks I shouldn't have TABOR to have protection from her greed. If you wonder why the Democrat party is losing favorability... THIS IS JUST ONE OF THE REASONS. You nickel and dime us after taxing us to Death and fucking up our local economy with over regulation and control. REPEAL THE BAG FEE.</p>
Ingrid Moore Against themselves	<p>Dear Committee Members, I strongly OPPOSE this bill.</p> <p>What problem is this bill trying to solve? The fee is in place in order to incentivize customers to bring their own bags/containers to the store when shopping. This will</p>

	<p>relieve the burden on municipal/county landfills, which would add up to a cost savings for citizens. The costs of landfill disposals would be much greater than cumulative bag fees.</p> <p>The fee also provides the customer with a paper alternative to plastic bags, which have become the scourge of the Earth. It would not be fair to impose the cost of these paper bags on the retailer.</p> <p>Most customers have adapted to this. The bill does not make any case that retailers effected by the bill have cried that managing this fee is an unreasonable burden.</p> <p>The cost to consumers is minimal and the burden to retailers is no more burdensome than charging for the sales tax, liquor taxes, etc.</p> <p>The case has not been made to repeal the fee. I urge the committee to vote NO on this bill.</p>
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