

# MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

The following document is provided by the  
**LAW AND LEGISLATIVE DIGITAL LIBRARY**  
at the Maine State Law and Legislative Reference Library  
<http://legislature.maine.gov/lawlib>



Reproduced from scanned originals with text recognition applied  
(searchable text may contain some errors and/or omissions)

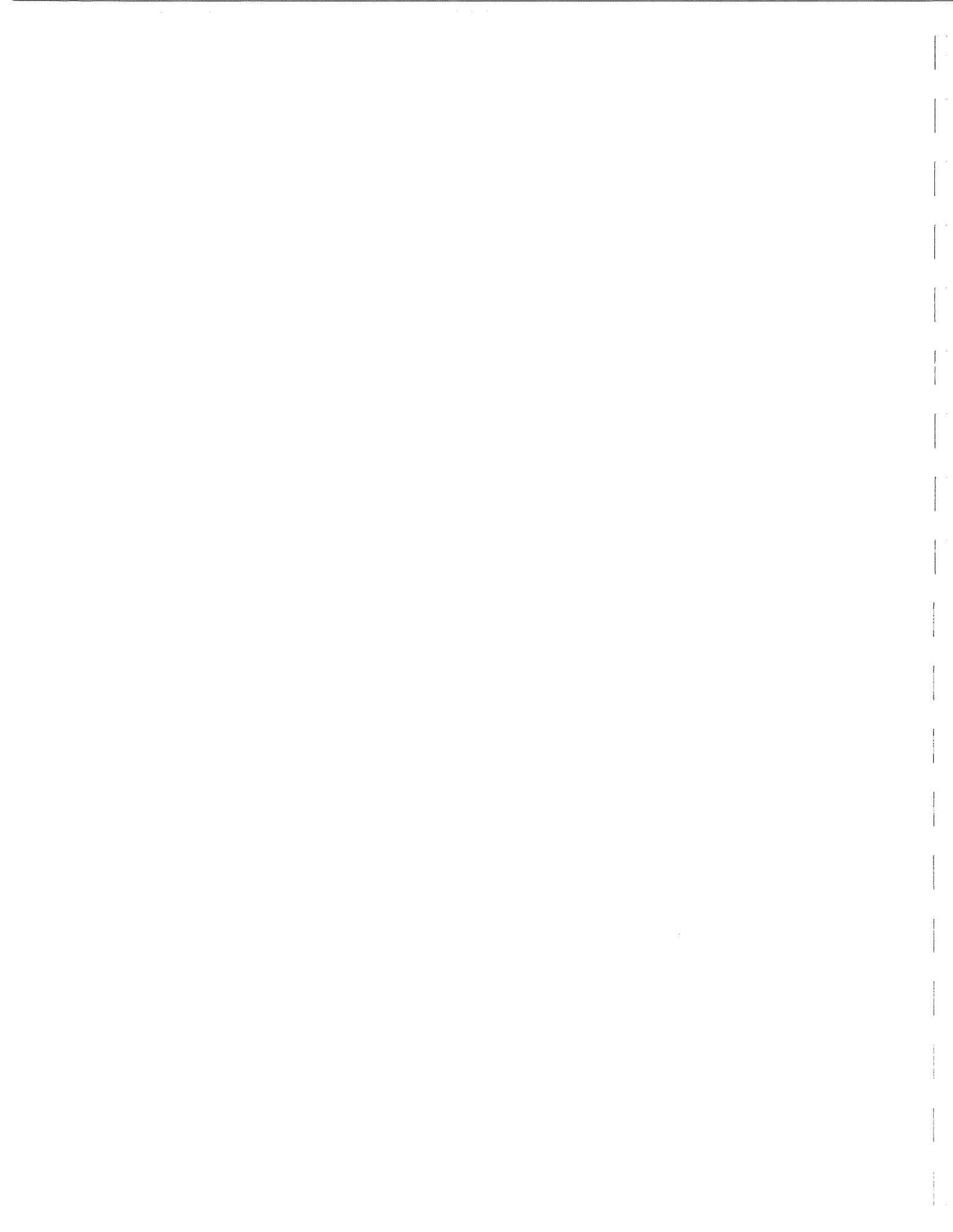


**REPORT  
ON THE  
PURCHASE  
OF  
RECYCLED PRODUCTS**

**February 7, 1997**

**Prepared for: Joint Standing Committee on  
Natural Resources Committee**

**Prepared by: Department of Administrative & Financial Services  
Bureau of General Services  
Division of Purchases**



## INTRODUCTION

Title 5 subsection 1812-A requires the Bureau of General Services, Division of Purchases to prepare a report on the State of Maine's efforts to purchase supplies and materials composed in whole or in part of recycled materials. This report must also include information on any procurement policies, incentives, educational programs, promotional efforts or other activities of these supplies and materials.

The last report was submitted in December of 1994. It presented a summary of items purchased and described the many steps taken by state government to improve the availability and use of recycled products. This report will highlight the success of the past year and the possibilities for the future.

It should be noted that buying recycled is easier today than five years ago. The stereotype of poor or inferior quality has been replaced by acceptance and advantages of products with recycled content. Many products are no more expensive, even less costly, than the virgin counterparts.

Businesses across the state and nation offer products freely, using recycled content product labeling as a marketing tool. Organizations like the Maine Buy Recycled Alliance, affiliated with the Maine Chamber of Commerce, provide resources, information and assistance to further the recycling initiative.

## PAPER PRODUCTS W/RECYCLED CONTENT

Title 5, MRSA, section 1812-B has established a requirement that, as of October 1, 1993, not less than 50% of the money spent on paper and paper products in any fiscal year be used for products with recycled material content.

The statute requires a fiscal year comparison. The calculations used are for 1996, based on the existing record keeping practices.

TYPE	PREVIOUS REPORT 1994	AMOUNT FY 96
Calendars	\$0.00	\$21,520.00
Offset Paper	\$8,139.92	\$7,356.00
Boxes, Corrugated, Liquor Bags, Kraft, etc.	\$2,433.61	\$4,338.00
Computer Paper & Labels	\$100,386.40	\$106,627.00
Paper (fine printing & copier)	\$27,754.66	\$611,904.00
Paper Towels, Toilet Tissue Napkins & etc.	\$208,424.94	\$196,429.00
Envelopes, pads, cards, etc.	\$103,393.70	\$ 316,959.00
Printing (all types)	\$575,749.49	\$1,408,269.00
Fax Paper	\$0.00	\$4,374.00
Misc..	\$0.00	\$7,843.00
	<hr/>	<hr/>
Total	\$1,276,072 .00	\$2,685,619.00

During this period of time, the total amount of paper and paper products purchased was:

All paper products	\$1,326,238.00
Printed products	\$3,435,611.00
Total	<hr/> \$4,761,849.00

Based on these totals, 56% of all paper and paper products purchased have a recycled material content meeting U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidelines. This is the highest total Maine State Government has ever achieved.

## OTHER RECYLCED PRODUCTS

### TIRES

Passenger vehicles, light and medium truck tires are available in a retreaded form. New passenger vehicle tires can be purchased at such low prices, in comparison to retreads, that use of retreaded tires does not occur.

Annual contracts for the retreading of medium/heavy truck and heavy equipment (payloaders, backhoes, tractors, etc.) tires are prepared by the Division of Purchases, primarily for the Department of Transportation. Calendar year 1996 usage was \$43,692.00.

### PLASTICS

Plastic trash bags used in state government are made of recycled plastic such as trimmings other trash bags, milk jugs, etc. The total purchases in the calendar year were \$118,103.00. The bag product under contract had 20% recovered and 10% post consumer recycled content.

Maine participates in a multi-state purchasing cooperative, headed by New York, for the purchase of traffic cones with post consumer recycled content. Maine spent \$9,406.00, buying traffic cones. Recycled picnic tables were purchased this year, 75% content, total expenditure \$2,760.00.

### EQUIPMENT

The use of reconditioned equipment continues within state government. Activity was spread across many lines. Total procurement was \$55,759.00.

### GLASS

Reflective glass beads, purchased for use in paint to make road stripes reflective, has a recycled content of 95% recycled glass from soda bottles. the purchases for fiscal year 1994 were:

Quantity 875 tons = \$331,625 \*

\* See cooperative purchasing under "initiatives"

## **METAL STOCK**

Aluminum license plate stock with a 98% recycled content, was purchased again this year. The material purchased totaled \$216,400.

The Division of Purchases successfully established contracts for the purchase of aluminum sign blanks with post consumer recycled content of 32%. The total value of these blanks, used by the Maine Department of Transportation is \$72,406.10.

Steel posts were purchased with recycled content, total dollars spent \$82,423.00.

## **TONER CARTRIDGES/PRINTER RIBBONS**

Recycled toner cartridges are now available from many sources. Quality control remains a significant issue with this product since both the toner and the reused cartridge must meet specific standards to operate well within laser printers. A statewide contract has been established.

This particular commodity created an excellent opportunity for completing the recycling loop. Division staff prepared specifications for bidding that required the successful supplier to reuse spent cartridges recovered from state facilities. This avoids the cost of disposal for the state agency, while providing a consistent source of reusable cartridges for the supplier. Usage has escalated.

Similarly, a contract has been established to facilitate the recycling of printer ribbons. This program though fairly new, has shown signs of success. total procurement for the fiscal year is only available combined with toner cartridges. \$72,954.00 was spent on recycled cartridges and ribbons, a major increase over previous years.

## **WIPING CLOTHS**

FY 96 represents the second time Division staff tracked reclaimed wiping cloths. Maine has purchased \$16,733.45 in reclaimed wiping cloths, avoiding landfills when a disposable product is used.

## **OTHER ITEMS**

Maine state government buys a wide variety of items direct from suppliers on the open market. Remanufactured/refurbished auto parts such as alternator, generator, and brake parts are frequently purchased. The Department of Transportation recycles anti-freeze on site, closing the loop within its own garage.

## **RECYCLED DISKETTES**

Maine issued a contract for the purchase of 3 1/2" personal computer diskettes. \$15,100 in diskettes were purchased. It should be noted this program was less than a smashing success. Frequent quality issues forced an eventual cancellation of the contract and re-bid. Virgin product is being purchased today.

## **INITIATIVES**

The Division of Purchases has been very active on several fronts concerning recycled products, market development and education:

A. Cooperative Purchasing - Purchases is a charter member of the Northeast Purchasing Cooperative, a group of states within the northeastern United States. Traffic cones with post consumer plastic were cooperatively bid by several New England states, Maine included.

Maine has coordinated the purchase of reflective glass beads for road paint for several years. this effort involved developing standardized specifications for Maine, Vermont and New Jersey. Bids were let, received, tabulated and awarded by Maine staff.

B. Municipality Involvement - The Division of Purchases has expanded its efforts with municipal governments and using state agencies. Nearly all products available to state government can be purchased by local and county governments through the Central Warehouse or directly from the supplier, at prices at or near state agency cost. This information has been posted of the Division's Internet Home Page.

C. The Division of Purchases provides nearly 700 copiers to state agencies across the state. For four years, the paper furnished for these machines has had recycled content. This was done without fanfare to avoid potential "perceived" operational difficulties. this has been a huge success, with no substantiated performance difficulties linked to the recycled content of the paper. Though a little more expensive than virgin content copier paper, the cost of copies was not impacted, due to efficiencies and efforts of Division staff.

## DIFFICULTIES

Considerable progress has been made by the Division of Purchases and state government as a whole. The Bureau of General Services operates a number of recycling programs to avoid waste and thus make more products available for purchase. One program recycles telephone directories from the capital area state agencies. Custodial staff coordinate the collection of the obsolete books, which State Postal Center staff provide transportation services. Cardboard and office paper are also regularly recycled.

The greatest difficulty facing government as it works to increase the use of products with recycled content paper is the cost. Current budget limitations prevent some products from being purchased because pricing is less than competitive against products without recycled content. Agencies must receive the greatest value for their dollar spent, particularly in tight budget times.

This said, the 1994 suspension of the 10% price preference for paper had an obvious impact on the Division's failure to meet the legislated target that requires 50% of all paper purchased to have a recycled content that meets EPA guidelines. In tight budget times, the balance is delicate. It is clear, the preference coupled with the ever closing gap in cost, is making a difference in our ability to reach the mandated goal.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Division of Purchases has had success in buying products with recycled content. State agency users have become aware of the quality and advantages of those products. As demonstrated by the increased dollars of procurement in many categories, and the number of new commodities being purchased, that awareness is paying off.

The efforts of the Bureau of General Services, including the Division of Purchases, should continue. Existing statute provides the opportunity for good, sound procurement techniques to be applied. The price preference applied to paper products should continue clearly demonstrated by the continued increase in recycled paper purchases.. When this preference is applied conservatively, using judgment to insure against adverse affects on ordering agencies, it allows for increased procurement of paper products.

The gains in many product categories have been significant and should continue. It is not practical, from a procurement and budget point of view, to expand the preference beyond paper. the momentum of the recycling effort will sustain these trends.

**PURCHASED  
SHORT LIST**

	1994 Report	1996 Report
Calendar	\$0.00	\$21,520.00
Offset paper	\$8,139.92	\$7,356.00
Boxes, Bags, Kraft Paper	\$2,433.61	\$4,338.00
Computer Paper & Labels	\$100,386.40	\$106,627.00
Paper (printing and copier)	\$277,544.66	\$611,904.00
Paper Towels, Tissue, Napkins	\$208,424.94	\$196,429.00
Envelopes, Pads, Cards	\$103,393.70	\$316,959.00
Printing (All Types)	\$575,749.49	\$1,408,269.00
Retread Tires and Retreading	\$66,889.52	\$43,692.00
Trash Bags (Plastic)	\$101,219.60	\$118,103.00
Reflective Glass Beads	\$196,600.00	\$331,625.00
Re-refined Motor Oil	\$14,178.99	\$ -0-
Aluminum Stock	\$159,200.00	\$246,400.00
Toner Cartridges/Ribbons	\$25,395.15	72,954.00
Wiping Cloths	\$13,569.37	\$16,733.00
Traffic Cones	\$15,165.70	\$9,460.00
Remanufactured Equipment	\$500,820.00	\$ 55,759.00
Picnic Tables	\$0.00	\$2,760.00
Recycled Diskettes	\$0.00	\$15,100.00
Steel Posts	\$0.00	\$82,423.00
Total	\$2,369,111.05	Total \$3,668,411.00