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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

December 2, 1993

The Honorable John Edward Porter
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Porter:

Thank you for contacting me regarding your thoughts about the Executive Order on Recycled Goods. It was good to hear from you, and I sincerely apologize for the delay in my response.

As you know, the President recently signed the Executive Order on Federal Acquisition, Recycling, and Waste Prevention. This Executive Order is the outcome of much hard work and consultation with industry and labor representatives, the environmental community, and consumer groups, as well as congressional and agency staff members.

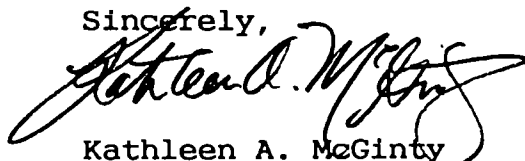
The Order will reduce solid waste, build markets for recycled products, encourage new technologies and protect the environment. This Executive Order requires all Federal purchases of printing and writing paper to contain 20 percent post-consumer material by the end of 1994, and 30 percent by the end of 1998. In addition, in order to further reduce the burden on landfills, paper made with 50 percent recovered by-products from the production of goods other than paper or textiles may be purchased, provided that this waste would otherwise end up in a landfill, as determined by the State.

And, the order directs the General Services Administration to revise paper specifications to allow agencies to purchase paper made with processes that minimize emissions of harmful by-products, including chlorinated compounds. According to some studies, these by-products can cause environmental damage including an increased risk of cancer.

In addition, this Executive Order requires agencies to make up any price increase by cutting waste and using less paper. We believe that this initiative will achieve the desired results of spurring recycling efforts and promoting a healthy environment.

Again, thank you for letting me hear from you.

Sincerely,



Kathleen A. McGinty
Director, White House Office on
Environmental Policy

JOHN EDWARD PORTER

10TH DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS

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September 15, 1993

Kathleen McGinty
Deputy Assistant to the President
Director, White House Office on
Environmental Policy
Old Executive Office Building, Room 360
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Katie:

I am deeply concerned by indications that the White House is giving in to pressure by the paper industry to weaken the President's executive order regarding government procurement of recycled paper. I very strongly support the language included in the draft of the executive order circulated in July requiring federal agencies to purchase paper containing at least 15 percent post-consumer paper.

It is my understanding that the alternative proposal advocated by the paper industry would allow paper to be called "recycled" even if it contained only 10 percent manufacturing scraps or over-issue materials that are never used by consumers. This proposal would do nothing to spur investment in equipment needed to recycle recovered post-consumer paper -- the very paper that is clogging our already overburdened landfills.

The industry proposal, therefore, would have virtually no impact on reducing the amount of waste destined for landfills. In fact, the manufacturing scrap or over-issue materials that the industry wants to include in its definition of "recycled" rarely ends up in landfills and has been recycled by the industry for years. Adopting the industry proposal would simply reward the status quo and would undercut companies that have already invested in the technologies necessary to recycle post-consumer waste paper.

As you may know, last year I introduced legislation to amend the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) to ensure government procurement of real recycled paper made with at least 15 percent post-consumer waste. I plan to reintroduce this legislation which enjoyed strong bipartisan support in the 102nd Congress.

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The President has the opportunity through this executive order to establish the federal government as a leader in the efforts to create markets for real recycled materials and to reduce the amount of waste destined to landfills and incinerators that are already well over capacity. I hope that the final version of the executive order will include a post-consumer waste content of at least 15 percent.

Sincerely,


John Edward Porter
Member of Congress

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