

**Repeal Outdated Recycled Newsprint Content**

**Proposed legislation:** Repeal Section 287.31 of the Wisconsin Statutes which requires Wisconsin-based newspaper publishers to use recycled newspapers in at least 33 percent of their newsprint content.

**Background:**  While the newsprint content mandate may have made sense when the law was passed in 1989 to spur recycling, the law no longer reflects market conditions.  In fact, it has been unenforceable for a number of years.

In 1990, 35 percent of all old newspapers were recycled.  Today, more than 73 percent of all old newspapers in the U. S. are recovered and recycled.  Old newsprint needed to produce recycled newsprint is being used to produce not just newsprint, but more valuable items like cellulose insulation, cereal boxes, egg cartons, grocery bags, pencil barrels and tissue paper.

In many cases, it is more economical and environmentally friendly to the manufacture of these products than shipping old newspapers to distant mills for recycling into new newsprint.   These market forces have combined to make recycled newsprint either prohibitively expensive or simply unavailable to Wisconsin publishers.

**Should the recycled content mandate be repealed?**

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) recently commissioned a report from paper recycling consulting firm Moore & Associates that concluded the following:

* Wisconsin’s recycled content newsprint has served its purpose and is not relevant in today’s era of recycling.
* There will be no impact on newspaper recycling and the environment as a result of eliminating the state of Wisconsin Recycled Content Mandate on Newspaper Recycling.
* That repeal of the state’s law will not reduce the recycling of newspapers nor contribute to the landfill or disposal of any additional newspapers.
* If Wisconsin continues its recycled content newsprint requirements, the state’s newspaper publishers will be at an economic disadvantage compared to other states.