

**SOUTH SHORE
RECYCLING
COOPERATIVE**
www.ssrcoop.info



PO Box 247
Westwood, MA 02090
781.329.8318
ssrcoopinfo@gmail.com

May 18, 2018

Rep. Josh Cutler
Rep. David DeCoste
Rep. Geoff Diehl
Rep. Ronald Mariano
Rep. Joan Meschino
Rep. Matthew Muratore
Rep. James Murphy

Sen. Michael Brady
Sen. Vinnie DeMacedo
Sen. John Keenan
Sen. Patrick O'Connor
Sen. Marc Pacheco

Dear South Shore delegation:

This morning, the South Shore Recycling Cooperative Board, representing the solid waste programs of its fifteen Member Towns, voted unanimously to **ask you to request that your colleagues in House Ways & Means report out [H447](#)**, An Act reducing packaging waste in the Commonwealth.



Ben Harvey of E.L. Harvey & Sons has stored about 3,000 bales of paper in the past month that he'd normally be shipping to China. At \$60 a bale, it equals about \$180,000 of unsold product, about 10 percent of the company's revenue.

In my 25 years in the business, I have never seen recycling market conditions in as big a hole as they are now. Municipalities and the recycling industry are reeling from high costs, low values, and few outlets. Recycling costs, especially for single stream, have skyrocketed, in some cases higher than that of disposal.

The crisis is due in large part to **sloppy single stream recycling** and China's response, an embargo dubbed **National Sword**. China is serious, and our recycling programs and industry are in jeopardy. A summary of the situation from our December newsletter is attached. It has gotten worse since it was written. The closure of the Ardagh Bottling Plant in Milford this winter exacerbated the situation. That had been the destination of most of our glass. The SSRC and our Member Towns have been committing resources to educating our residents about proper recycling.

The other drivers of this crisis are the **proliferation of single use products**, too much **not-quite recyclable packaging**, and **too little recycled packaging**. H447 is designed to incentivize packaging producers to use minimal, recyclable, and recycled content in their products, as well as to share the cost of their proper end-of-life management.

Packaging makes up about 30% of our waste, and about 60% of our recycling. Our fifteen towns handled **42,000 tons** of recyclables in 2017. At current rates, which have been rising since the

fall, the cost to manage them will be well **over \$2 million** in FY19. The days of rebates for mixed recyclables are long gone.

With more supply of recyclables than demand, several local recycling and hauling companies are struggling or folding. Baled paper and plastics are stranded in MRF parking lots. Some recyclables are heading to the landfill, which also are diminishing in capacity in Mass.

If passed, [H447](#) would confer some financial responsibility for managing packaging waste to the producers of the material through a small fee. The amount of the fee would be based on the type, weight and cost to manage packaging waste. Recyclability and recycled content would be considered in the fee assessment. This is meant to incentivize producers to design and manufacture more sustainable packaging. Companies such as Unilever and P&G are already striving to do this.

It is only fair that the industry that produces and profits from what they sell to step up and share the responsibility for its disposal. EU countries and several Canadian provinces have **packaging stewardship** programs in place. California and Connecticut have taken up the issue in recent months.

I have been working with the **Mass. Product Stewardship Council** (organized by MassRecycle) on this, and am seeking help from ELM and other champions capable of helping this bill see the light of day this session. Will you be a champion?

Rep. Hecht, a cosponsor, is setting up a meeting to discuss the situation in the coming weeks. I hope you or someone from your staff can attend.

H447 was reported out of the Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Committee, and is now in House Ways & Means. Would you please **communicate your support for H447 to HW&M?**

Thank you for your time and attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Claire L. Galkowski, Executive Director
South Shore Recycling Cooperative

Cc: Rep. Paul McMurtry
Rep. Jonathan Hecht
Sen. Michael Rush



**SOUTH SHORE RECYCLING
COOPERATIVE**
PO Box 247
Westwood, MA 02090

«FIRST» «LAST», «POSITION»
«CO»
Town of «TOWN»
«ADDRESS»
«TOWN2», MA 0«ZIP»