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## Northeast Recycling Council Updates Summary of Announced Increased Capacity to Use Recycled Paper

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NERC has published an update to its Summary of Announced Increased Capacity to Use Recycled Paper report. Despite all of the upheaval in the recycling industry, several capacity expansions have been completed and others are moving towards their projected opening dates. This latest update reflects our continuing progress towards increased capacity to use recycled paper in North America.

When NERC first published this list in November, 2018, it included new capacity at 17 mills, of which three projects were completed. This latest update includes 28 expansions, of which nine have been completed. Whether or not all of the new capacity is built depends, among other things, on overall economic circumstances and demand for the final products. Announcement of a new mill does not guarantee it will be built. One planned conversion is now on hold. Announced opening dates are often pushed back. Nonetheless, the completed and announced capacity increase is impressive.

The list of additional North American recycled paper capacity includes totally new paper mills along with existing mills that are closed or are still operating but are being converted to produce different end products (e.g. from newsprint to packaging). It also includes two mills that will be using recycled feedstock other than OCC and RMP. One is a facility designed to produce paper pulp and plastic pellets using beverage cartons and aseptic packages as its primary feedstock. The other is a mill designed to use food contaminated paper from commercial sources.



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The majority of new capacity increases in this list are for mills producing linerboard and corrugated medium. They will use old corrugated containers (OCC), often called "cardboard boxes", as their feedstock. They are unlikely to use mixed paper, whether derived from residential or commercial recycling programs, unless their stock preparation system allows for its use. However, up to half of these mills plan to use mixed paper. For the most part, mixed paper will be a minor input. Several mills, however, plan to consume significant amounts of residential mixed paper (RMP) which is collected at curbsides throughout the country. In addition, the price for mixed paper tracks that of old corrugated containers. Increased capacity and market value for old corrugated containers normally increases the price paid for residential mixed paper.

The total new capacity that this information reflects the potential for more than 5 million TPY of new OCC and mixed paper consuming capacity and 1 million TPY of recycled pulp. NERC has been reporting on national investment in paper recycling infrastructure since November 2018. The report has been updated six times – April, June, August, November 2019, March 2020, and January 2021.

For more information, visit [www.nerc.org](http://www.nerc.org).

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