



Publishers Embrace Vision for a Green Future

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NEW YORK—The publishing industry has been fitted for 20-20-20 vision.

The Book Industry Environmental Council, a coalition of publishers, booksellers, librarians, printers and paper manufacturers, announced Thursday a goal to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 20 percent in the year 2020 (based on 2006 numbers), the equivalent, the council says, of pulling 450,000 cars off the road.

The council, which says it represents more than 60 percent of the book market, intends to shrink emissions by 80 percent in 2050. While individual publishers have set environmental goals, the council's announcement marks a broader industry commitment.

"I'm very pleased that our industry has set aggressive but achievable goals that will have tangible benefits and will surely set a precedent for other industries," Pete Datos, chair of the council's climate subcommittee and vice president for inventory and procurement at the Hachette Book Group USA, said in a statement.

No specific plans have been established, but the council cited some possible roads to reductions: increased use of recycled fiber, greater energy efficiency in office buildings, fewer destroyed books that end up in landfills and using market research and digital technology to reduce the number of unsold books returned to publishers (long a desired, but elusive goal for the industry).

"The tools at our disposal have dramatically improved — providing better insight to improve our forecasts, reducing lead times to get books printed and distributed faster, and increasing our flexibility to print just the "right" quantities," Datos said.

The council has yet to take a stand on e-books, saying that the benefits of saving paper may be offset by the possible toxic effects of electronic devices.

The council was formed last year and its coordinators include the Green Press Initiative, an environmental organization that works with book and newspaper publishers, and the Book Industry Study Group, a publishing industry trade association.

News Release:

April 16th, 2009

Multi-Billion Dollar Industry Sets Climate Goals in Line With President Obama's Vision

(New York) Today, the Book Industry Environmental Council announced a goal of reducing the U.S. book industry's greenhouse gas emissions 20% by 2020 with the intent of achieving an 80% reduction by 2050. This industry-wide commitment is a global first in publishing and is in-line with President Obama's vision for necessary reductions across all levels of society.

The U.S. book industry is an over \$30 billion-a-year industry and despite facing economic constraints, is making a commitment to meaningful environmental responsibility and progress. This 20% reduction will represent a savings of up to 2.5 million metric tons per year -- equivalent to removing 450,000 cars from the road and keeping them off.

“It is wonderful to see the industry’s expanding commitment to taking action on these issues. There’s a lot more work to be done, but this is a momentous step and will help to unify many of the other efforts underway in the industry,” said Todd Pollak, Program Manager at the Green Press Initiative.

Environmental Savings and Green Jobs

Paper is arguably the industry’s largest impact – nearly 65% of the sector’s carbon footprint according to the analysis completed in 2008. There are a broad range of steps companies in the book industry can take to achieve or surpass this goal including increasing the use of recycled paper six-fold from 2006 levels, reducing returns by 20% and reducing the number of books in landfills by 30%. The tree savings of achieving the recycled goal alone would total nearly seven million trees per year and support the creation of 765 recycling-related green jobs.

About the Council

The Council ([see www.bookcouncil.org](http://www.bookcouncil.org)) that set this target is comprised of more than 40 industry stakeholders representing more than 60% of market-share from the largest to the smallest publishers, printers, mills, and others. The Council has been chaired by Random House and was initially formed and is now coordinated by the Green Press Initiative – a non-profit organization working to reduce the environmental impacts of publishing since 2001. The Council is also co-coordinated by the Book Industry Study Group; an industry trade association with a 30 year history of advancing innovation and efficiency in the book industry.

“In these challenging economic times, one would think that environmental leadership takes a backseat to profits and economic survival. Fortunately, both are possible and we are hopeful that this commitment will set a precedent for other industries to follow,” said Tyson Miller, founder and director of the Green Press Initiative.

Other Progress

In addition to the significant commitment represented by the greenhouse gas reduction target, the Council is also working on additional priorities including the development of a green publisher certification program modeled after the LEED system – a certification initiative of the U.S. Green Building Council. This program will measure and certify leading publisher’s environmental performance and will require certified publishers to successfully eliminate virtually all fiber coming from Endangered Forests or areas of social conflict.

The U.S. book industry has steadily intensified its commitment to improving environmental performance in recent years and the unanimous approval of this climate goal is yet another positive step forward.

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