



# Fort Peck Business Plan

Compostable Packaging

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# 1. Executive Summary

The Fort Peck Tribes are pursuing an Indigenous-led manufacturing venture focused on industrial hemp-based paper and single-use molded products including biodegradable plates, clamshells, and packaging trays to serve states and industries transitioning away from plastic. This initiative builds directly on our 2025 Feasibility Study, which confirmed the economic and technical viability of hemp fiber processing and identified strong market growth in sustainable packaging.

Located in northeastern Montana, the Fort Peck Reservation provides a strategic base for eco-friendly, value-added manufacturing with rail access, existing industrial infrastructure, and federal Opportunity Zone designation. Rather than competing in cultivation, the project focuses on downstream processing converting hemp fiber sourced from regional suppliers into pulp and finished molded fiber products.

The initiative advances the Tribe's long-term goals of economic diversification, job creation, and environmental stewardship, aligning with federal and global sustainability mandates such as the U.S. Bioeconomy Initiative and California's SB54 Plastic Pollution Prevention Law.

## Key Objectives:

- Establish a tribally owned hemp-based manufacturing enterprise producing sustainable single-use products.
- Leverage sovereign advantages Opportunity Zone status, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) loan guarantees, and tribal tax incentives to attract Environmental Sustainable and Governance (ESG) aligned investors.
- Create local employment through workforce development partnerships with Fort Peck Community College.
- Forge strategic alliances with corporate and government partners seeking compliant, plastic-free product alternatives.

This project represents both an economic engine and a symbol of Indigenous innovation uniting traditional stewardship with modern clean manufacturing.

## 2. Mission, Vision & Values

To establish a tribally owned, environmentally sustainable manufacturing enterprise that transforms industrial hemp into biodegradable packaging and single-use products

advancing the Fort Peck Tribes' economic sovereignty, workforce development, and environmental restoration goals.

This mission supports a new vision of tribal-led circular economic development, where production, consumption, and waste are managed as part of a regenerative cycle. By embedding sustainability at every stage from sourcing to end-of-life, the initiative directly aligns with both the Circular Action Alliance (CAA) and California's SB54 Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act.

## Alignment with the Circular Action Alliance (CAA)

The Circular Action Alliance, a non-profit Producer Responsibility Organization (PRO), administers Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) programs across the U.S. Its goal is to help producers meet recycling and compostability requirements through design innovation and material recovery.

The Fort Peck initiative aligns with CAA principles in several ways:

- **Circular Material Design:** Hemp fiber is renewable, compostable, and recyclable, meeting the CAA's material criteria for circular packaging systems. Fort Peck's molded fiber and paper products are designed to re-enter the production cycle through composting and fiber recovery.
- **Closed-Loop Infrastructure:** By leveraging tribal rail access and regional partnerships, the project establishes a regional circular supply chain where waste and byproducts can be reused as input for energy or soil enhancement (biochar, fiber recovery).
- **Producer Partnership Pathways:** The initiative positions Fort Peck as a certified supplier to CAA member brands such as Unilever, Nestlé, and Walmart, that must demonstrate verifiable progress toward EPR compliance and plastic reduction.
- **Data & Reporting Integration:** CAA's reporting protocols emphasize traceability and material lifecycle tracking. Fort Peck's operation will integrate carbon accounting, waste diversion metrics, and product traceability into its ESG and supplier compliance systems.

Through this alignment, the Fort Peck Tribes not only supply CAA compliant materials but also serve as a model tribal enterprise advancing national circular economy objectives through Indigenous stewardship.

## Alignment with California's SB54 Plastic Pollution Prevention Law

California's SB54 mandates that all packaging be recyclable or compostable by 2032, with a 25% reduction in single-use plastics by weight and per capita use. The Fort Peck initiative directly supports these mandates through both product design and market focus:

- **Compostable Packaging Supply:** Fort Peck's hemp-based clamshells, plates, and trays are engineered to meet SB54's compostability and recyclability standards, providing manufacturers and retailers with a ready alternative to banned plastic materials.
- **California Market Entry:** California represents the largest single U.S. market for sustainable packaging, with institutional buyers (food service, hospitality, retail) urgently seeking compliant supply. Fort Peck's products allow these companies to achieve SB54 compliance while supporting tribal economic development.
- **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) Compatibility:** The hemp facility's traceable production model supports EPR reporting under SB54, enabling brand partners to document material origin, carbon savings, and compostability certifications.
- **Environmental Justice & Equity:** SB54 emphasizes equitable participation and access to recycling infrastructure. The Fort Peck project exemplifies environmental equity by embedding Indigenous leadership within a national sustainability movement, ensuring tribal communities are beneficiaries, not bystanders, of the green transition.

## Our Vision

To position the Fort Peck Tribes as a national leader in sustainable, Indigenous made materials, providing scalable, plastic-free alternatives for states, corporations, and institutions pursuing circular economy solutions.

## Our Core Values:

- **Sovereignty & Self-Sustainability:** Strengthen the Fort Peck economy through tribally owned enterprises that generate long-term revenue and independence.
- **Environmental Stewardship:** Protect the land and future generations by promoting biodegradable, renewable materials.
- **Cultural Restoration:** Reclaim Indigenous leadership in environmental responsibility, reimagining the "Crying Indian" narrative as one of innovation, not loss.

- **Community Empowerment:** Provide meaningful employment and training opportunities to tribal members through education and enterprise.
- **Collaboration & Accountability:** Operate transparently and form partnerships that reinforce ethical business practices and shared value creation.

Through alignment with both Circular Action Alliance standards and SB54 compliance frameworks, the Fort Peck Tribes are positioned to become a strategic manufacturing partner for corporations, municipalities, and government programs driving the U.S. transition to circular, compostable packaging systems. This initiative not only delivers tangible environmental impact; carbon reduction, waste diversion, plastic replacement but also reinforces the tribe's sovereignty, resilience, and stewardship of the Earth as core elements of its business mission.

### 3. Market Opportunity

The transition from single-use plastics to sustainable packaging represents one of the most significant industrial shifts in decades. Global demand for sustainable paper and packaging exceeded \$390 billion in 2025 and is projected to surpass \$500 billion by 2032, driven by e-commerce, food service, and consumer goods industries.

Within this sector, hemp-based molded fiber products including clamshells, trays, and utensils are forecast to grow more than 13% annually through 2033, reaching nearly \$800 million in market value. This growth is reinforced by strict regulatory frameworks banning or taxing single-use plastics across California, New York, Oregon, Washington, and several other states.

#### FortPeck's Market Fit:

- **Regulatory Alignment:** Directly supports Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws such as California's SB54, which require compostable or recyclable packaging by 2032.
- **Sovereign Cost Advantages:** Tax incentives and Opportunity Zone benefits provide lower operational costs and investor tax deferrals.
- **Strategic Geography:** Rail access enables bulk shipments to major green economies across the West Coast and Midwest - Seattle, Denver, Chicago, and Minneapolis.
- **ESG Investment Appeal:** Indigenous ownership enhances access to impact capital and corporate sustainability partnerships.

- **Product Versatility:** The plant will supply molded fiber plates, food-service containers, and packaging materials tailored for eco-conscious buyers in food, hospitality, and retail.

## Regulatory Landscape

Across the U.S., dozens of states are enacting plastic reduction laws, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks, and Styrofoam bans, creating a clear commercial opening for industrial hemp packaging. These policies require packaging to be recyclable, compostable, or reusable within the next decade precisely where Fort Peck's product line fits.

- **California (SB54 – Plastic Pollution Prevention and Packaging Producer Responsibility Act):** Mandates that all packaging be recyclable or compostable by 2032. As the fifth largest economy in the world, California offers massive demand for compliant molded fiber and hemp-based packaging.
- **Washington:** Statewide bans on single-use plastic utensils, straws, and bags are already in effect. Municipalities such as Seattle mandate compostable food-service products, offering early market penetration potential.
- **Oregon:** Statewide Styrofoam and bag bans combined with Portland's strong green purchasing mandates create a robust market for hemp-based alternatives.
- **New York:** Bans single-use plastic bags and restricts expanded polystyrene foam packaging for restaurants and retailers. The state is implementing EPR packaging reforms beginning 2026.
- **New Jersey:** Enforces one of the most comprehensive bans on single-use carryout bags, straws, and foam food containers positioning the state as a growing buyer of sustainable service ware.
- **Vermont & Maine:** Early adopters of single-use plastic bans and compostable product standards, offering consistent institutional demand for biodegradable packaging.
- **Colorado:** Statewide single-use bag fees (2024) and full bans (2025) drive rapid adoption of alternatives. The state's sustainability-oriented CPG and food sectors are ideal partners.
- **Hawaii:** Enforces a near-total ban on plastic bags and foam containers across all islands - an isolated but symbolically strong market for eco-friendly, lightweight packaging imports.

- Minnesota: Emerging green economy with municipal procurement mandates and proximity to Fort Peck's rail distribution network.
- Illinois: EPR legislation under review; early pilots encourage compostable food packaging.
- Massachusetts & Rhode Island: Active statewide plastic reduction bills expected by 2026, particularly for food-service packaging.

## Target Geographies and Demand Drivers

### Primary Growth Markets:

California, Oregon, Washington, New York, New Jersey - Large population centers with enacted EPR mandates, dense restaurant and retail networks, and corporate ESG commitments.

### Secondary Opportunity States:

Colorado, Vermont, Maine, Minnesota, Illinois, Massachusetts - States adopting similar legislation and strong municipal-level sustainability procurement programs.

### Adjacent Markets:

Nevada, Arizona, Maryland, and Pennsylvania - Implementing plastic bag restrictions and early-stage composting laws that could expand into broader packaging requirements.

These states collectively represent over 45% of U.S. consumer spending on packaged goods and are concentrated along major rail corridors accessible from Fort Peck, enabling efficient distribution via BNSF lines to the West Coast and Midwest hubs (Seattle, Denver, Chicago).

## Strategic Advantage for Fort Peck

- First-Mover Positioning: Few North American producers are manufacturing hemp-based molded fiber products at scale, giving Fort Peck early entry in a fast-growing niche.
- Policy-Driven Demand: Federal, state, and municipal mandates for compostable packaging ensure stable demand growth through 2035.
- ESG & Corporate Partnerships: Fortune 500 companies (Amazon, Unilever, Nestlé, General Mills) have pledged 100% recyclable or compostable packaging by 2030, creating partnership opportunities.
- Sovereign Cost Advantage: Opportunity Zone tax benefits, BIA loan guarantees, and tribal exemptions create price flexibility and investor appeal.

- Cultural Brand Appeal: “Tribal Made” and Indigenous branded sustainability products align with ethical consumer trends and government supplier diversity goals.

Here’s a plant level revenue view using your feasibility assumptions, then I’ll show how it maps across the “states of opportunity.”

### Projected plant revenue (base case)

- Capacity assumption: ~5.25–5.95 tons/day finished molded fiber output (small–mid size facility), ~2,300–2,450 tons/year at steady state (Feasibility Study \_ Hemp Paper1).
- Modeled price: \$1,837/ton (hemp paper proxy) used in the revenue table (Feasibility Study \_ Hemp Paper 2).

### Resulting revenue

- Year 1: \$3,375,738
- Year 2: \$3,600,788
- Year 3: \$3,825,837

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<sup>1</sup> Feasibility Study \_ Hemp Paper

<sup>2</sup> Feasibility Study \_ Hemp Paper

“We are building a tribally led, scalable hemp-based materials platform to replace plastics—aligned with policy, grounded in Indigenous stewardship, and designed to become the next material standard.”

Please for more technical information  
please contact us.



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