

Data regarding the volume and value of Petitioner’s shipments of paper plates for the period of investigation are provided at **Exhibit I-2**. Lost sales and lost revenue allegations for the members of the APPC are provided at **Exhibit I-3**.

**C. Description of the Merchandise**

**1. Product Description and Technical Characteristics**

The merchandise that is subject to this petition are paper plates, which may be white, colored, and/or printed, and if printed, may be printed and/or laminated by any means with images, text and/or colors on one or both surfaces. Colored paper plates subject to this investigation may be colored by any method, including but not limited to printing, beater-dyeing, and dip-dyeing. Paper plates subject to this investigation may be produced from paper or paperboard of any type, have any caliper or basis weight, have any size, have one or more sections, be fluted or unfluted, and be uncoated or have any surface finish, including but not limited to coating, laminating, cold-stamping, hot-stamping, die-cutting, and/or embossing.

A full technical description is provided in the proposed scope language below.

**2. Specifications**

Paper plates are sold by shape, grade, size, coating, quantity, and pattern/colors. The products subject to this Petition are paper plates in any shape. Grades of paper plates range from uncoated “economy” or “value” plates to heavy duty paper plates, which often are colored or are decorated with a pattern. Packages of paper plates are typically sold containing only one size, pattern/color, shape, and grade. Paper plates can also be marketed by use, which can refer to a subset of paper plates within a certain size tolerance, such as round “dinner” plates measuring between 8.5 inches and 10 inches in diameter.

**3. Production Process**

In general, all paper plates are produced using essentially the same process and inputs. From harvested log to the final paper plate product, the following manufacturing processes are involved: 1) the production of pulp, 2) the production of paperboard, and 3) the finishing process, which includes any printing or coloring (if necessary), as well as cutting and forming of the plate itself. While the description below covers the entire log to paper plate production process, Petitioner notes that many paper plate producers purchase paperboard as an input.

The paperboard used in the production of paper plates is made from mechanical pulp, recycled paper pulp, and/or chemical pulp (also called “Kraft pulp”), as well as additional fillers and additives. Pulping is the process of breaking down wood or existing paper into its individual fiber strands.

Mechanical pulping breaks the solid wood apart into wood fibers. Typically, the thermomechanical process is used, where logs are processed into small, uniformly sized chips in a woodchipper. These wood chips are then placed into refiners that use two rotating disks to apply heat and pressure to break apart the chips into fibers.

Chemical pulping breaks the wood apart into fibers using chemicals. Specifically, wood logs are chipped, then those chips are placed in a pressurized digester cooking vessel with water and chemicals to separate out cellulose fibers.

Recycled pulp takes used paper products and breaks them down into cellulose fiber strands using water, chemicals, and heat. The resulting fibers from these processes are then washed and bleached before being used to make paperboard.

The pulp is then sprayed onto a moving mesh screen where water is removed through suction and squeegees. After nearly all of the water is removed, the resulting sheet of paper is hot-rolled, pressed and squeezed to into layers of paper, which are then combined and given a clay coating to provide strength, resulting in paperboard. The paperboard is then placed on rolls and cut to a specific width. For certain paper plates, these rolls are sent to a printing press to add designs and printing, as well as additional coatings for strength or liquid resistance.

The either printed or unprinted rolls are sent to the forming press where plates are cut and pressed into final shape and form. These finished paper plates are then collated, bagged, packaged, and shipped.

#### **4. Uses**

Paper plates are used as tableware for casual dinners, picnics, large formal gatherings, or any event where the plate is to be discarded after eating, including certain foodservice establishments and takeout meals.

#### **5. Current Tariff Classification**

Merchandise subject to these investigations is classified under Chapter 48 of the HTSUS.<sup>5</sup> If properly classified, the merchandise that is subject to this Petition should be imported using the following HTSUS subheading:

- 4823.69.0040 (“Other paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding and webs of cellulose fibers, cut to size or shape; other articles of paper pulp, paper, paperboard, cellulose wadding or webs of cellulose fibers: Trays, dishes, plates, cups and the like, of paper or paperboard: Other: Other”)

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<sup>5</sup> See HTSUS Chapter 48, excerpts attached at **Exhibit I-4**.

Petitioner notes that this tariff code is a basket category that includes products in addition to the paper plates covered by the scope, including plates produced directly from liquid fiber that is formed into the desired shape and then cured, and paper bowls. Petitioner also notes that while this classification is provided for convenience and for customs purposes, the written description of the scope of this investigation is dispositive.

**6. Proposed Scope Language**

The following language describes the imported merchandise from China that is within the scope of this Petition:

The merchandise subject to this investigation is certain paper plates. Paper plates subject to this investigation may be uncolored, white, colored, or printed. Printed paper plates subject to this investigation may have any type of surface finish, and may be printed by any means with images, text and/or colors on one or both surfaces. Colored paper plates subject to this investigation may be colored by any method, including but not limited to printing, beater-dyeing, and dip-dyeing. Paper plates subject to this investigation may be produced from paper of any type, may have any caliper or basis weight, may have any shape or size, may have one or more than one section, may be embossed, may have foil or other substances adhered to their surface, and/or may be uncoated or coated with any type of coating.

The paper plates subject to this investigation remain covered by the scope of this investigation whether imported alone, or in any combination of subject and non-subject merchandise.

The paper plates subject to this investigation include paper plates matching the above description that have been finished, packaged, or otherwise processed in a third country by performing finishing, packaging, or processing that would not otherwise remove the merchandise from the scope of the investigations if performed in the country of manufacture of the paper plates. Excluded from the scope of this investigation are paper plates produced directly from liquid fiber that is formed into the desired shape and then cured.

Also excluded from the scope of this investigation are paper bowls, paper buckets, and paper food containers with closeable lids.

**D. Countries of Exportation**

The paper plates that are the subject of this Petition are produced in and exported from China, Thailand, and Vietnam. Petitioner expressly notes, however, that subject merchandise produced in China, Thailand, or Vietnam remains subject to this proceeding regardless of the country from which it is exported to the United States.

**E. Producers and Exporters of Subject Merchandise**

Publicly available data regarding exporters of paper plates from China, Thailand, and Vietnam, compiled from publicly available ship manifest data and supplemented by publicly available contact information, are provided at **Exhibit I-5**. Information about the proportion of total exports to the United States accounted for by each company on the list during the most recent 12-month period is not reasonably available to Petitioner.

Based on public ship manifest data and other reasonably available information, a list of known producers of paper plates in China, Thailand, and Vietnam is also included in **Exhibit I-5**.

**F. Importers of the Subject Merchandise**

Based on public ship manifest data and other reasonably available information, a list of importers that Petitioner believes have imported paper plates into the United States from China, Thailand, and Vietnam is included in **Exhibit I-6**.