

# 2026

## PACKAGING INDUSTRY **ECONOMIC IMPACTS STUDY**

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### STUDY PURPOSE, SCOPE AND FINDINGS

From reducing food waste to protecting life-saving medicines and enabling global commerce, packaging keeps products safe, conveys essential information and supports communities through the industry's economic impact.

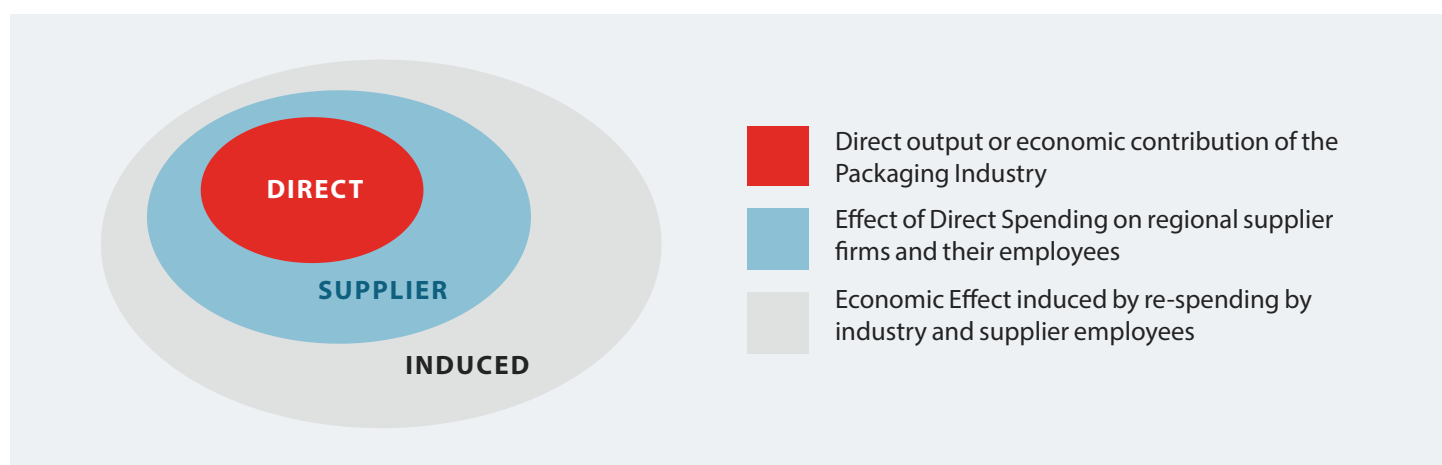
To better understand the economic impact created by the packaging industry, AMERIPEN retained the leading economic consulting firm of John Dunham & Associates to analyze the size and scope of the packaging industry in the United States and document its significant contribution to the U.S. economy in terms of employment (including jobs and wages), tax generation and overall economic output at the national and state levels.

Employment and economic output data were segmented by direct, supplier, and induced impacts:

**Direct impacts** are solely attributable to packaging manufacturers. For the purposes of the study, packaging comprises a wide range of products including containers, boxes, cans, bottles, bags, protective packaging, labels, packing material and envelopes, pallets and drums, whether made from glass, metals, paper/fiber/wood or plastics. While some of these items may not be considered "packaging" (e.g., labels) by some, these products are increasingly included in packaging-related policies like extended producer responsibility, so AMERIPEN choose to include them in the study.

**Supplier impacts** include goods purchased by packaging manufacturers such as raw material, tools or machinery used in the production process, transportation, warehousing, logistics, or sales. In addition, suppliers include personnel services, financial services, advertising services, consulting services or government enterprises responsible for the regulation of the packaging industry.

**Induced impacts** encompass the regular spending of wages by employees of packaging manufacturers, and those of supplier firms whose jobs are directly dependent on packaging product sales and production, including housing, food, educational services and medical care.

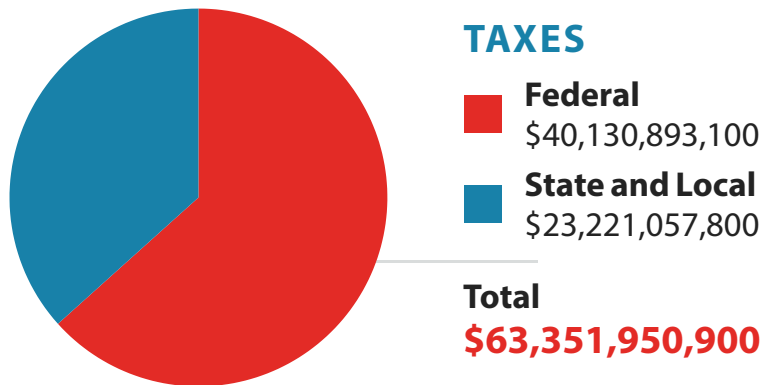


## 2026 PACKAGING INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACTS STUDY

The 2026 Packaging Industry Economic Impacts Study found that industry contributes about \$694.79 billion in economic output or 2.14 percent of GDP.<sup>1</sup> Through its production and distribution linkages, it impacts firms in more than 500 sectors of the U.S. economy.<sup>2</sup> Packaging manufacturers directly or indirectly support approximately 1.82 million American jobs, and these workers earn over \$160.39 billion in wages and benefits.

|                        | DIRECT            | SUPPLIER          | INDUCED           | TOTAL                    |
|------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Economic Output</b> | \$238,307,544,500 | \$298,105,820,600 | \$158,375,415,000 | <b>\$694,788,780,100</b> |
| <b>Jobs</b>            | 379,975           | 749,064           | 691,482           | <b>1,820,521</b>         |
| <b>Wages</b>           | \$37,825,892,600  | \$72,776,804,100  | \$49,790,020,200  | <b>\$160,392,716,900</b> |

An important part of the impact analysis is the calculation of the contribution of the industry to the public finances of the community. According to the 2026 study, the taxes paid by packaging manufacturers and their employees provide nearly \$63.35 billion in revenues to the federal, state, and local governments. These figures do not include state and local sales taxes paid on packaging goods purchases themselves.



The U.S. packaging industry, its suppliers and related industries, produce **\$694.79 billion in economic output**, provide **1.82 million jobs**, pay **\$160.39 billion in wages**, and contribute **\$63.35 billion in federal, state and local taxes**.

<sup>1</sup> Based on GDP of \$32,486.10 billion. U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, "Table 1.1.5. Gross Domestic Product" (Q2 2026, accessed September 2026).

<sup>2</sup> Economic sectors are based on IMPLAN sectors.

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## United States

|                                  | Jobs                    | Wages                        | Economic Output          |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Direct Impacts*</b>           |                         |                              |                          |
| Glass                            | 13,398                  | \$1,585,191,900              | \$8,240,570,300          |
| Metals                           | 48,229                  | \$5,300,938,800              | \$47,333,230,400         |
| Paper/Fiber/Wood                 | 226,493                 | \$22,480,604,200             | \$137,798,674,100        |
| Plastics                         | 91,855                  | \$8,459,157,700              | \$44,935,069,700         |
| <b>Total Direct Impacts</b>      | <b>379,975</b>          | <b>\$37,825,892,600</b>      | <b>\$238,307,544,500</b> |
| <b>Supplier Impacts**</b>        |                         |                              |                          |
| Agriculture                      | 17,947                  | \$1,225,577,200              | \$2,153,498,200          |
| Mining                           | 6,510                   | \$1,203,882,400              | \$5,192,517,500          |
| Construction                     | 11,135                  | \$1,028,804,600              | \$2,593,864,400          |
| Manufacturing                    | 152,106                 | \$18,413,239,200             | \$138,112,440,100        |
| Transportation & Communication   | 184,317                 | \$15,886,548,400             | \$46,489,715,800         |
| Wholesaling                      | 84,384                  | \$10,183,058,200             | \$38,098,466,600         |
| Retailing                        | 7,850                   | \$476,657,500                | \$1,291,390,400          |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 73,028                  | \$5,332,991,100              | \$25,387,149,500         |
| Travel & Entertainment           | 22,320                  | \$1,007,363,200              | \$2,869,295,000          |
| Business & Personal Services     | 180,428                 | \$16,912,195,100             | \$32,736,451,700         |
| Government                       | 9,039                   | \$1,106,487,200              | \$3,181,031,400          |
| <b>Total Supplier Impacts</b>    | <b>749,064</b>          | <b>\$72,776,804,100</b>      | <b>\$298,105,820,600</b> |
| <b>Induced Impacts***</b>        |                         |                              |                          |
| Agriculture                      | 11,938                  | \$557,872,900                | \$2,323,874,600          |
| Mining                           | 1,224                   | \$263,292,500                | \$1,035,168,600          |
| Construction                     | 6,184                   | \$544,931,300                | \$1,259,006,800          |
| Manufacturing                    | 25,058                  | \$2,556,331,000              | \$18,089,916,900         |
| Transportation & Communication   | 52,855                  | \$5,342,233,400              | \$18,090,018,500         |
| Wholesaling                      | 19,225                  | \$2,400,379,800              | \$8,881,612,600          |
| Retailing                        | 85,116                  | \$4,185,477,000              | \$10,871,968,700         |
| Finance, Insurance & Real Estate | 87,722                  | \$6,392,860,400              | \$40,473,626,700         |
| Travel & Entertainment           | 102,690                 | \$4,156,785,700              | \$12,333,085,500         |
| Business & Personal Services     | 273,607                 | \$21,664,883,300             | \$41,685,876,900         |
| Government                       | 7,173                   | \$847,649,800                | \$2,261,671,600          |
| Other                            | 18,690                  | \$877,323,100                | \$1,069,587,600          |
| <b>Total Induced Impacts</b>     | <b>691,482</b>          | <b>\$49,790,020,200</b>      | <b>\$158,375,415,000</b> |
| <b>Total Economic Impact</b>     | <b>1,820,521</b>        | <b>\$160,392,716,900</b>     | <b>\$694,788,780,100</b> |
|                                  |                         |                              |                          |
|                                  | <b>Federal Taxes</b>    | <b>State and Local Taxes</b> | <b>Total Taxes</b>       |
| <b>Business Taxes</b>            | <b>\$40,130,893,100</b> | <b>\$23,221,057,800</b>      | <b>\$63,351,950,900</b>  |

\* Impacts solely attributable to packaging manufacturers.

\*\* Impacts including goods and services purchased by packaging manufacturers from other industries.

\*\*\* Impacts of the re-spending of income earned by employees and business owners in the direct and supplier segments.

## 2026 PACKAGING INDUSTRY ECONOMIC IMPACTS STUDY

### STUDY METHODOLOGY

John Dunham & Associates, Inc. produced the study for AMERIPEN utilizing the IMPLAN Group LLC Model in order to quantify the impact of the packaging industry on the economy of the U.S.<sup>3</sup> The model adopts an accounting framework through which the relationships between different inputs and outputs across industries and sectors are computed. It is based on the national income accounts generated by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA).<sup>4</sup>

The IMPLAN model is designed to run based on the input of specific direct economic factors. It uses a detailed methodology to generate estimates of the other direct impacts, tax impacts, and supplier and induced impacts based on these entries. In the case of the AMERIPEN Economic Impact Model, direct employment in the packaging industry was the starting point for the analysis.

The estimated packaging industry **jobs** were derived using Data Axle employment data (as of January 2026), aggregated by North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) industry code and zip code, combined with product-level sales data from the most recent U.S. Economic Census data (2022).

NAICS codes classify businesses and organizations by their operations, while North American Product Classification System (NAPCS) codes break down the specific products and services generated within each NAICS code. Because a given NAICS industry typically encompasses a mix of products, only some of which fall within the scope of packaging, the NAPCS-level sales data were used to isolate the packaging-related share of each industry.

For each NAICS code included in the study, JDA identified the NAPCS codes determined to be within the scope of the packaging industry, summed up the associated sales, and divided by total industry sales. This calculation produced a percentage break representing

the proportion of jobs in each NAICS code attributable to packaging. Each zip code's Data Axle job count for a given NAICS code was then multiplied by that industry's percentage break, yielding direct packaging-related job figures at the zip code level, which were subsequently aggregated at the state level.

Once the initial direct employment figures have been established, they are entered into a model linked to the IMPLAN database. The IMPLAN data are used to generate estimates of direct wages and output.

**Wages** were derived from data from the U.S. Department of Labor's ES-202 reports that are used by IMPLAN to provide annual average wage and salary establishment counts, employment counts, and payrolls at the county level. Since this data only covers payroll employees, it is modified to add information on independent workers, agricultural employees, construction workers, and certain government employees. Data are then adjusted to account for counties where non-disclosure rules apply. Wage data include not only cash wages, but health and life insurance payments, retirement payments, and other non-cash compensation. It includes all income paid to workers by employers.

**Economic output** is the value of production by industry in a given state. It is estimated by IMPLAN from sources similar to those used by the BEA in its RIMS II series. Where no Census or government surveys are available, IMPLAN uses models such as the Bureau of Labor Statistics Growth model to estimate the missing output.

The model produces estimated **federal taxes** from corporate income, payroll, personal income, estate and gift, and excise taxes, customs duties, fines, fees, etc. **State and local tax** estimates are derived from corporate profits, property, sales, severance, estate and gift, and personal income taxes; licenses and fees and certain payroll taxes.

<sup>3</sup> IMPLAN® model, 2024 Data, using inputs provided by the user and IMPLAN Group LLC, IMPLAN System (2026), 16905 Northcross Dr., Suite 120, Huntersville, NC 28078, [www.Implan.com](http://www.Implan.com).

<sup>4</sup> RIMS II is a product developed by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis as a policy and economic decision analysis tool. IMPLAN was originally developed by the US Forest Service, the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the Bureau of Land Management. It was converted to a user-friendly model by the Minnesota IMPLAN Group, Inc. in 1993.

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### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit **AMERIPEN.org/economic-impact** for national and individual state reports and data tables, which provide additional details on economic impacts by packaging material type, supplier type and sectors of the economy.

### ABOUT AMERIPEN

AMERIPEN—the American Institute for Packaging and the Environment—represents the entire packaging value chain, advocating for responsible packaging policies that drive meaningful progress in packaging sustainability while supporting industry growth and consumer needs. As the leading voice for packaging policy in the United States, AMERIPEN works with legislators, regulators, and stakeholders to develop science-based, data-driven solutions that enhance packaging's role in product protection, circularity, and everyday life. Through its Power of Packaging™ initiative, AMERIPEN also helps policymakers, industry leaders, and the public better understand the essential role packaging plays in protecting products, reducing waste, supporting commerce, and serving communities. Learn more at **www.ameripen.org** and explore The Power of Packaging™ at **www.powerofpackaging.org**.



**[AMERIPEN.org/economic-impact](https://ameripen.org/economic-impact)**

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