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## **Baden-Württemberg Minister of Economic Affairs Dr. Hoffmeister-Kraut Visits Koehler Paper**

**Oberkirch, 06/18/2025** – The Minister of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism of the State of Baden-Württemberg, Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut, recently visited Koehler Paper in Oberkirch. Among other topics, there was a discussion on how to make a further dent in the amount of disposable plastic packaging that is currently being used in retail: “In order to be able to recycle more environmentally friendly packaging, we need to improve the corresponding regulatory framework,” Hoffmeister-Kraut said.

### **Reducing the amount of disposable plastic packaging: a need for more meaningful packaging classifications**

Against a backdrop of tremendous amounts of plastic waste worldwide, people are increasingly turning their sights on paper-based retail packaging – this packaging is significantly more environmentally friendly than plastic packaging, and can be disposed of as wastepaper and then recycled into a valuable and scarce secondary raw material that is desperately needed in Germany. Moreover, paper – at least in the case of Koehler Paper – is based on renewable raw materials from sustainable forestry and controlled sources. This of course underscores how, as mentioned previously, paper-based packaging is an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic-based packaging. Nevertheless, existing regulations mean that producers of products such as food currently have to contend with enormous barriers when attempting to switch to environmentally sound and easily recyclable paper-based packaging, which is why they continue to rely on plastic-based packaging instead. This means that unnecessary amounts of plastic are being used and disposed of every single day.

### **Risk of lower tax revenue if checkout receipts are no longer mandatory**

Another subject that Minister Dr. Hoffmeister-Kraut and Koehler Group representatives touched on was the German federal government’s coalition agreement – more specifically, how it outlines plans to eliminate the requirement to provide checkout receipts. This requirement was originally introduced in 2020 in order to curtail tax evasion. Not only that, but it is also a way to build trust among consumers, as well as an important auditing tool for the government. The current coalition agreement links the elimination of this requirement to ongoing and necessary digitalization efforts, among other things. Koehler Paper COO Dr. Stefan Karrer had the following to say in this regard: “The requirement for mandatory checkout receipts is not only a powerful tool against tax evasion, but also one that provides consumer protection and ensures fair competition. All we’re asking for is that its elimination not be rushed. Instead, the government should wait for the cash register law evaluation planned for this year in order to first develop working digital alternatives and only then loosen the requirement – this is absolutely crucial if we want to protect the German consumer.”

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### Long-term reduction in energy prices vital in order to secure competitiveness in Germany

During Minister Dr. Hoffmann-Kraut's visit, Koehler Group representatives also underscored just how important it is for German SMEs to see a change in energy prices in Germany in order to become competitive once again. Koehler Paper COO Dr. Stefan Karrer explained: "Due to high energy costs in Germany, we're experiencing enormous competitive disadvantages in an industry where competition is global. In order to be able to ensure job security and value creation in this country, we really need to once again have public grid energy prices that are internationally competitive and can be reliably budgeted for."

During their chat with the Minister of Economic Affairs, Koehler Group representatives insisted that it is absolutely crucial for the actions planned by Germany's federal government to truly bring relief to companies and to not be rendered ineffective as a result of other support measures being wound down. Put simply, energy prices are a powerful lever that can be used to noticeably improve the German industry's situation and ensure job security. Dr. Hoffmeister-Kraut went on to affirm that both state and federal governments were aware of the importance of these conditions and added: "We need to stimulate entrepreneurship in Germany while also ensuring job security – needless to say, we can only achieve that by bringing actual relief to companies."



*Figure: The Minister of Economic Affairs, Labor, and Tourism of the State of Baden-Württemberg, Dr. Nicole Hoffmeister-Kraut visits Koehler Paper at its headquarters in Oberkirch and talks to Dr. Stefan Karrer, Chief Technology Officer of the Koehler Group (right) and Philipp Prechtl, Managing Director of Koehler Innovative Solutions (left). Source: Koehler Group*

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## About the Koehler Group

The Koehler Group was founded in 1807 and has been family-run from that moment to the present day. The group's core business activity lies in the development and production of high-quality specialty paper. This includes—among others—thermal paper, playing card board, beverage coasters, fine paper, carbon-less paper, recycled paper, decor paper, wood pulp board, sublimation paper, and also innovative specialty paper for the packaging industry. In Germany, the Koehler Group employs around 2,500 people across five production sites, with three additional sites in the USA. The group operates internationally, with an export share of around 70% in 2023, and brings in an annual turnover of around 1.1 billion euros.

As an energy-intensive company, Koehler invests in renewable energy projects such as wind energy, hydropower, photovoltaics, and biomass with its Koehler Renewable Energy business unit. The Koehler Group has set a goal of producing more energy from renewable sources by 2030 than is required for its paper production operations.

With its Koehler Innovative Solutions division, the Koehler Group is collaborating with start-ups to promote innovations in the core business segments “paper” and “renewable energy”.

Find more information at: <https://www.koehler.com>

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