FIELD NOTES FROM THE TEXTILE INDUSTRY · CONFERENCE REPORT

Putting Sustainability to Work in Outdoor

DAY 0 OIA CATALYST CONFERENCE · PORTLAND · OCTOBER 26, 2026

In Portland, the outdoor industry took up a practical question. How do you turn commitments on textile recovery, emissions and durability into decisions about what to make and how to make it?



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Todd Copeland of Copeland Consultancy and Julie Brown of the Outdoor Industry Association (OIA) co-hosted a room of more than 300 leaders from brands, suppliers, manufacturers and service providers. These were the people making decisions about everything from fabrics and footwear to outdoor equipment.

OIA organized the conference in conjunction with Functional Fabric Fair, produced by RX and powered by PERFORMANCE DAYS®. GORE-TEX® Brand was the presenting sponsor and Hyosung was the platinum sponsor. Bronze sponsors included Prosper Portland, Portland Athletic & Outdoor, The Climate Label Certified and Trillora Packaging Solutions.

Outdoor Industry Association event recap



Day 0 OIA Catalyst Conference in Portland

California textile recovery

California's Responsible Textile Recovery Act (SB 707) put producer responsibility on the agenda. Jessica Matlock of Landbell USA and Allyson Williams of CalRecycle walked through the program. Guru Larson, Columbia Sportswear's director of sustainability, brought the brand perspective to the discussion.

Landbell and CalRecycle invited attendees from the industry to contact them and collaborate to work out the details for this new law.

Dates and expected costs

July 1, 2026 · Covered producers were required to join the approved producer responsibility organization, Landbell USA. Its $1,000 flat registration fee applies to the 2026–2027 cycle.

March 1, 2027 · Landbell's initial statewide needs assessment is due. **July 1, 2028** is the earliest effective date for implementing regulations.

July 1, 2030 · The law ties additional producer obligations to plan approval or July 1, 2030, whichever comes first. Future eco-modulated fees are expected to reflect sales volume and product characteristics such as durability, repairability and recyclability.

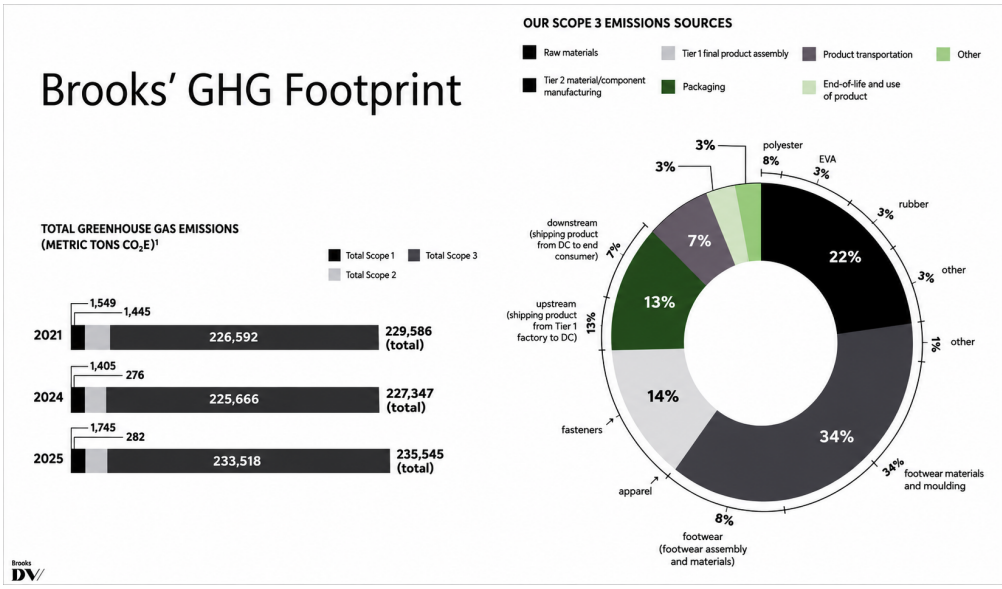
Conference notes recorded planning estimates of **$0.03 per pound in 2028** and **$0.30 per pound in 2030**. These figures are preliminary estimates. The notes also cited March 2032 as a later rollout milestone. The published schedule places producer obligations earlier.

Landbell USA compliance roadmap and guide
CalRecycle program timeline

The work behind climate targets

The climate discussion looked beyond 2030. REI discussed its 2050 net-zero plan and the work of reducing emissions across Scopes 1, 2 and 3. Brooks Running's footprint made the supply-chain challenge visible. Scope 3 accounts for most of its reported emissions, with material production and product assembly among the sources shown.

BROOKS RUNNING GREENHOUSE GAS FOOTPRINT



Tools for reducing emissions

The discussion pointed to ZEMBA and DHL GoGreen for shipping and logistics, and to the Clean Energy Buyers Association for clean power procurement.

Designing for durability

Durability carried over into the fair itself. Designing for longer product life starts with choices made in development.

Representatives from W.L. Gore and Red Wing Shoes led a session about the importance of durability as part of sustainability.

Authors note: Product durability doesn't need to equate to lower sales for the brand - subscription programs, renting, reuse and buy back programs can incentives long term product usage and continued private equity revenue.

AI and inventory planning

For retailers, AI could help align inventory decisions with the selling cycle and demand, reducing unsold stock. The conference also raised the energy and cooling-water needs of the data centers behind those tools.

New materials and investment

Matereal introduced POLARIS™, a drop-in alternative to conventional polyurethane for coating, extrusion and molding. The discussion with Alante Capital raised a familiar question for developers of bio-based materials. Where does the funding come from to move a technology into commercial production?

In afternoon breakouts, Burton, KEEN, Lenzing and W. L. Gore discussed how to introduce new substrates and adhesives into products. One example was KEEN's EcoEnd midsole, which uses a Midori-Bio additive designed to promote biodegradation under landfill conditions.

KEEN and Lenzing discussed the business case for investing in sustainability progress. Burton discussed their journey of eliminating harmful solvents from manufacturing while maintaining high quality, durable products.

Collaboration and compliance

U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici closed the day with a call for industry and government to work together. Digital product passports, compliance and investment were part of that discussion. The conversation continued on the Functional Fabric Fair floor.

Interested in a deeper dive into this event? Schedule advisory time with Courtney at: c.caneer-williams@gherzi.com.