

**WHEREAS** an estimated 8 million tons of plastics are carried into oceans annually; by 2050 there could be more plastic than fish. Plastic beverage containers are among the most common items found in beach cleanups. One-half of Starbucks drinks are now cold drinks, most served in plastic cups, with no reported recycled content. Plastics degrade in water to small particles that animals mistake for food; plastic pollution impacts 260 species, causing fatalities from ingestion, entanglement, suffocation, and drowning. Former UN Undersecretary-General Erik Solheim called the issue “an ocean Armageddon.”

As Starbucks and peers have fostered a wasteful “to go” disposable coffee cup culture, plastic pollution of land and water has become an urgent environmental issue. Starbucks aspires to reduce the environmental impact from its packaging; however, it has failed to achieve several signature goals, such as cup recycling and serving a quarter of beverages in reusable cups in all operated U.S. and Canada stores. Explosive business growth in China suggests the company’s waste footprint may be expanding instead of shrinking.

The company operates in 75 countries, but has cup recycling goals apparently for only the U.S. and Canada. Starbucks operates 3,300 stores in China and plans to nearly double that to 6,000 by 2022. It opens a new store in China every 15 hours. China has been cited as the leading source of plastic waste in oceans (28%). Starbucks has not reported taking steps to recycle cups in China. Competitor McDonald’s Corp. will recycle packaging at all locations globally by 2025. Lack of similar commitment by Starbucks could lead to backlash by its environmentally aware customer base.

The company failed to attain greatly reduced goals regarding reusable containers, a key step toward reducing environmental impact. Starbucks rescinded a 2008 goal to deliver 25% of beverages in reusables by 2015, then failed to meet a reduced goal of 5%. Estimates of beverages served in reusable cups fell from 1.6% in 2015 to 1.3% in 2018. Starbucks replaced clear reporting on the number of stores recycling cups with a vague goal to double recyclability of cups, raising questions about the status of these signature initiatives.

**BE IT RESOLVED** Shareholders request that the Board of Directors of Starbucks issue a report to shareholders, at reasonable cost and omitting proprietary information, on reducing the company’s environmental impacts by stepping up the scale and pace of its sustainable packaging initiatives.

**Supporting statement:** Proponent believes that the Board should evaluate and report on the potential for fulfilling the company’s environmental impact leadership commitments and goals toward reducing ocean pollution, including more detailed disclosure of any trends, policies and metrics on issues such as:

- Progress toward recycling cups in operations, worldwide,

- Assessing the environmental impact of business expansion in markets lacking recycling and waste management capacity,
- Disclosing how many cups collected in stores are actually recycled,
- Progress towards a significantly increased reusable container goal, and
- Progress toward using recycled content in plastic cups.