

Vivek Sankaran, President and CEO
Albertsons Companies
250 Parkcenter Blvd.
Boise, ID 83706

September 19, 2019

RE: Phase out toxic per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) in your supply chain

Dear Mr. Sankaran:

We appreciate Albertsons Companies' commitment to sustainability and are writing today to ask you to expand on it. As you know, scientists are sounding the alarm about a growing body of evidence linking exposure to toxic chemicals to health problems and diseases, such as cancer, learning disabilities, and reproductive disorders. As such, American consumers are growing increasingly concerned about food safety and chemical hazards. We appreciate the work that your company has done to shift away from the use of bisphenol A (BPA) in private-label canned goods (although we still encourage you to ensure the substitutes are safer). However, BPA and other bisphenols are not the only chemicals of concern in the food supply that your company should be addressing.

We are writing today to urge Albertsons Companies to complete a full phaseout of PFAS from the products and packaging you sell. We recognize and appreciate that Albertsons has begun to take action on PFAS in certain prepared food and bakery product packaging, and encourage the company to go further.

In recent years, these chemicals have received a tidal wave of attention from scientists, regulators, the media and the public for contaminating the drinking water of millions of Americans. A major route of exposure to these chemicals comes from the food we eat. PFAS are used for their grease- and water-resistant properties in food packaging and other food contact materials.

PFAS chemicals were commercialized without adequate data or safety testing. Now chemicals in this class have been linked to cancer, liver damage, and immune suppression. Scientists have dubbed them "forever chemicals" because, once they are manufactured, they can persist in our bodies and the environment for generations to come.

Testing commissioned earlier this year by the Mind the Store campaign and Toxic-Free Future indicated the likely presence of PFAS chemicals in samples of your company's store-brand products and foodservice ware. The investigation found that the following items, obtained at Albertsons and Safeway grocery stores, were likely treated with PFAS:

- The bags of O Organics popcorn (Butter and Simply Salted flavors) and Signature Select popcorn (Extra Butter and Kettle Corn flavors);

- Signature Care Mint Waxed Comfort Floss;
- Decorative plates used under store bakery cakes; and
- A hot bar clamshell container.

Several months after this testing was completed, Albertsons recently disclosed that it “*Worked with industry experts and replaced certain prepared food and bakery product packaging to remove per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS).*” We are pleased to see this step in the right direction, and we encourage you to build on it in the months and year ahead.

The use of PFAS in food packaging presents a potential hazard for people who eat the food within. It also creates a long-term problem when the packaging is disposed of in compost or garbage. As the packaging breaks down, it releases its PFAS into the environment, leading to contamination of soil, air, water, and compost.

In the report *Take Out Toxics: PFAS Chemicals in Food Packaging*, Safer Chemicals Healthy Families and Toxic-Free Future found that safer alternatives to many items that are treated with PFAS are readily available. For instance, three of the eight take-out containers tested for the report were likely not treated with PFAS (including two InnoPak InnoBox Edge paperboard cartons provided at Albertsons stores), as were five of the seven cake plates tested. There is no good reason to use packaging containing these highly fluorinated chemicals when demonstratively viable alternatives are available.

Unfortunately, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration lacks the mandate, budget and political will to modernize our broken chemical safety system to address these and the thousands of other chemicals that have been approved for use. Fortunately, some state and local governments are leading the way. Washington State and Maine have both enacted laws to phase out PFAS in food packaging made of paper and paperboard by January 1, 2022. In addition, cities like San Francisco and Berkeley have also passed ordinances restricting PFAS in food packaging. Denmark just announced it is banning PFAS in packaging.

Large retailers like Albertsons Companies have an important role to play to ensure the safety of products and packaging at retail. For instance, in response to the *Take Out Toxics* report, Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s both pledged to take initial action on PFAS in food packaging. Further, when faced with the problem of PFAS chemicals found in microwave popcorn bags, the European grocery chain Coop transitioned to microwave popcorn bags free of these harmful chemicals.

In sum, there is a growing body of evidence that points to the inherent dangers of PFAS exposure that is fueling the rising demand for safer food contact materials. We believe it’s time for Albertsons Companies to lead by enacting proactive steps to mitigate this growing ecological and human health challenge. In doing so, your company can differentiate itself from competitors, build trust with customers, and bolster your reputation, all the while staying ahead of changing regulations. Taking action to remove products that expose consumers to

dangerous chemicals will position Albertsons Companies as an adaptive industry leader in your commitment to sustainability and the well-being of your communities.

We urge you to:

1. Adopt and implement a public policy with clear quantifiable goals and timelines for reducing and eliminating PFAS in all private-label and brand-name food contact materials, building on the efforts you have begun. The products that have already tested as likely treated with PFAS are a good place to start. Your company should publicly report on progress and announce when your products are PFAS-free.
2. Agree to meet the new Washington and Maine bans on PFAS use in food packaging not just in those states, but in every state in the U.S.
3. Develop a comprehensive safer chemicals policy to reduce and eliminate other toxic chemicals, such as *ortho-phthalates*, in food contact materials and other products.

As one of the top U.S. grocery retailers, your company has the power and a moral responsibility to lead on this issue. Taking action swiftly will be a win-win for you and your customers.

We would appreciate your response to our concerns and recommendations by October 18, 2019.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mike Schade, Mind the Store Campaign
Director
Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families
Brooklyn, NY

Leslie Tamminen, Director
7th Generation Advisors
Los Angeles, CA

Pamela Miller, Executive Director
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Anchorage, AK

Michael Doshi, Policy Coordinator
Algalita Marine Research & Education
Long Beach, CA

Elizabeth Saunders, Coordinator
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow
Boston, MA

Lydia Poncé, AIM Member
American Indian Movement
Venice, CA

Kelly McBee, Waste Program Coordinator
As You Sow
Berkeley, CA

Judith Enck, Founder, and former EPA
Regional Administrator
Beyond Plastics
Bennington, VT

Louis A Zeller, Executive Director
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
Glendale Springs, NC

Nancy Buermeyer, Senior Policy Strategist
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners
San Francisco, CA

Sue Chiang, Pollution Prevention Director
Center for Environmental Health
Oakland, CA

David Azoulay, Environmental Health
Program Director
**Center for International Environmental
Law (CIEL)**
Washington, DC

Kathleen A. Curtis, LPN, Executive Director
Clean and Healthy New York
Albany, NY

Lynn Thorp, National Campaigns Director
Clean Water Action
Washington, DC

Andria Ventura, Toxics Program Manager
Clean Water Action California
Oakland, CA

Melissa Guillet, Vice President
Climate Action Rhode Island
Providence, RI

Sabrina Davis, Lead Organizer of
Environment and Transit
Coalition for Social Justice
Fall river, New Bedford, Brockton,
Massachusetts

Crystal Rain, Program Associate
Conservation Voters for Idaho
Boise, ID

Josh Nelson, Co-Director
CREDO Action
San Francisco, CA

Rebecca Meuninck, Deputy Director
Ecology Center
Ann Arbor, MI

Elizabeth Scott, Elizabeth Scott
Elizabeth Scott Consulting
Wakefield, RI

Patrick MacRoy, Deputy Director
Environmental Health Strategy Center
Portland, ME

Marcia, President
Green Newton Inc
Newton, MA

Sue Phelan, Director
GreenCAPE
West Barnstable, MA

David Pinsky, Senior Plastics Campaigner
Greenpeace USA
Washington, DC

Lynn Nadeau, treasurer
HealthLink, Inc
Marblehead, MA

Charlotte Brody, RN, National Director
Healthy Babies Bright Futures
Charlottesville, VA

Deanna White, Director
Healthy Legacy Coalition
Minneapolis, MN

Vicki Nichols Goldstein, Founder and
Executive Director
Inland Ocean Coalition
Boulder, CO

Dr. Charlotte L. Keys, CEO
JPAP
Columbia, MS

Jose Bravo, Executive Director
Just Transition Alliance
San Diego, CA

Tracy Gregoire, Healthy Children Project
Coordinator
Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
Windham, ME

Emily Scarr, Director
Maryland PIRG
Baltimore, MD

Cheryl Osimo, Executive Director
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition
Franklin, MA

Jodi Sugerman-Brozan, Executive Director
**Massachusetts Coalition for Occupational
Safety & Health (MassCOSH)**
Boston, MA

Thomas Estabrook, Member, Board of
Directors
Massachusetts Teachers Association
Lowell, MA

Jim Vallette, President
Material Research L3C
Southwest Harbor, ME

Zen Honeycutt, Founding Executive Director
Moms Across America
Mission Viejo, CA

Tom Hucker, Senior Advocate
Natural Resources Defense Council
Washington, DC

Monica Schrock, Program Director
Non Toxic Revolution
Los Angeles, CA

Amy Ziff, Executive Director Nontoxic
Certified & MADE SAFE
Nontoxic Certified / MADE SAFE
Irvington, NY

Chris Hagerbaumer, Deputy Director of
Programs & Administration
Oregon Environmental Council
Portland, OR

Kelly Campbell, Executive Director
Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Portland, OR

Robert M. Gould, MD, President
**Physicians for Social Responsibility, San
Francisco Bay Area Chapter**
San Francisco, CA

Dianna Cohen, Co-Founder and CEO
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Berkeley, CA

Young, BFFP Campus Campaign Director
Post-Landfill Action Network
Philadelphia, PA

Alicia Culver, Executive Director
Responsible Purchasing Network
Orinda, CA

Sarah Doll, National Director
Safer States
Portland, OR

Diane Wilson, Executive Director
San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper
Seadrift, TX

Ted Schettler MD, MPH, Science Director
**Science and Environmental Health
Network**
Ames, IA

Sonya Lunder, Senior Toxics Policy Advisor
Sierra Club
Washington, DC

Mary Pendergast, RSM, Sister
Sisters of Mercy
Pawtucket, RI

Robin Schneider, Executive Director
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Austin, TX

Miranda Fox, Campaigns Manager
The Story of Stuff Project
Berkeley, CA

Laurie Valeriano, Executive Director
Toxic-Free Future
Seattle, WA

Liberty Goodwin, Director
Toxics Information Project (TIP)
Providence, RI

Miriam Gordon, Program Director
UPSTREAM
San Francisco, CA

Lauren Hierl, Executive Director
Vermont Conservation Voters
Montpelier, VT

Paul Burns, Executive Director
Vermont Public Interest Research Group
Montpelier, VT

Jamie McConnell, Director of Programs and
Policy
Women's Voices for the Earth
Missoula, MT

Heather Trim, Executive Director
Zero Waste Washington
Seattle, WA