

Mr. John Mackey
CEO, Whole Foods Market
550 Bowie Street
Austin, TX 78703-4644

March 11, 2021

Dear Mr. Mackey:

On October 12th, 2020 a coalition of groups sent a letter urging you to take bold action on reducing plastic waste. Now, an even larger number of groups are writing to reiterate the need for action and to demonstrate the breadth of support for Whole Foods to put Planet Over Plastic by eliminating all single-use plastic packaging from its stores.

Since the last correspondence, a [study](#) published in Nature found that the globe has reached a major tipping point in which the weight of human-made materials outweighs the total living biomass of the planet. In that same study it was found that the total mass of plastic that has been produced globally is greater than the combined mass of all terrestrial and marine animals. Just [9% of this plastic](#) has been recycled while the vast majority is incinerated or sent to landfills. New data reveals that each year [15 million tonnes](#) of plastic enters the ocean -- the equivalent of two garbage trucks dumping a load of plastic into the sea every single minute.

We need all hands on deck to turn the tide on plastic pollution. Supermarkets must eliminate the worst forms of plastic including single-use plastic packaging -- an item used just once and then pollutes our rivers and oceans for hundreds of years. In 2019, the Ocean Conservancy found that [plastic food wrappers](#) beat out cigarette butts as the number one item polluting beaches worldwide. By switching to food and product delivery systems that use reusable and refillable packaging, supermarkets can replace single-use plastic packaging with a more sustainable model. Whole Foods Market can continue its leadership in supermarket sustainability by committing to a bold path forward for reducing plastic waste.

We know that the public cares deeply about preserving a healthy, habitable planet and wants to see Whole Foods to take action on plastic waste. Several groups in the coalition have gathered tens of thousands of petitions calling on Whole Foods to take action, and hosted events with over 200 attendees to educate the public on the problem of single-use

plastic packaging at Whole Foods. In the coming months, we will have a variety of public communications and events calling on Whole Foods Market to be the leader we know it can be by putting the planet over plastic. We cannot stress enough the urgency of the plastic pollution crisis and will be appealing to the public and your customers that so greatly want to see Whole Foods Market step up and lead.

Ultimately, we want to see Whole Foods Market to eliminate all single-use plastic packaging from your shelves. And in the shorter-term, we ask that you commit to the following concrete, verifiable steps by your shareholder meeting in May 2021. They are:

1. Reduce by 25% the number of single-use plastic packaging units sold by the 365 Everyday Value and Whole Foods-branded product lines each year by 2025.
2. Generate 15% of your annual revenue from the sale of products sold in reusable or refillable packaging by 2025.
3. Publicly report the gross weight and units of plastic packaging sold each year by the annual shareholder meeting in May 2022.

As you know better than anyone, customers value Whole Foods as a company that [nourishes people and the planet](#) by emphasizing organic food, healthy living, customer satisfaction, quality and sustainability. Given the scale of the plastic pollution crisis that threatens our wildlife, wild places, and public health, taking action to reduce your company's plastic footprint is critical to the integrity of the Whole Foods brand. Whole Foods has already demonstrated its leadership by being the first national grocer in the U.S. to ban plastic straws, but more is needed.

Now, we urge you to step up your leadership by engaging your private-label brand and national brand suppliers to achieve an overall reduction in single-use plastic packaging units sold. In a [ranking](#) by As You Sow, Whole Foods received an "F" for its failure to reduce plastic pollution, falling behind other major retailers such as Walmart, Costco and Kroger. This trend was also reported in Greenpeace's supermarket [plastics scorecard](#) in which Whole Foods lost many points for a lack of corporate policy and transparency on reducing your plastic footprint.

This is doable. The regional grocery chain Giant Eagle has [committed to eliminating all single-use plastic](#) in its operations by 2025; now we need a national grocer to make similarly ambitious commitments.

Whole Foods Market needs a response to plastic pollution that matches the severity of the crisis. Wildlife, wild places, and our communities depend on your leadership on this issue. We request that you respond to this letter by no later than March 26, 2021 and look forward to your response. You can reach out to Reino Hyyppa at rhyppa@environmentamerica.org.

Sincerely,

Environment America Research and Policy Center
U.S. PIRG Education Fund
350 Sacramento
350 Seattle
350 Silicon Valley
Algalita
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments
Amnesty International at MSU
Anacostia Riverkeeper
Annapolis Green
Audubon Chapter of Minneapolis
Azul
Bainbridge Island Zero Waste
Beyond Plastics
Beyond Toxics
BRINGit
BVote Climate
Californians Against Waste
CALPIRG
Center for Biological Diversity
Clean Water Action
CONNPIRG Students
CoPIRG
CURE (Clean Up the River Environment)
Earth Ministry/WA Interfaith Power & Light
Eckerd College Organization of Students
EcoRise
Elders Climate Action, SoCal chapter
Elon Sierra Student Coalition

Environment California
Environment Colorado
Environment Connecticut
Environment Council of Rhode Island
Environment Florida
Environment Georgia
Environment Illinois
Environment Maine
Environment Maryland
Environment Massachusetts
Environment Minnesota
Environment Missouri
Environment Nevada
Environment New Jersey
Environment North Carolina
Environment Oregon
Environment Texas
Environment Virginia
Environment Washington
Environmental Action
Environmental Advocates NY
Environmental Club at Rhode Island College
Environmental Defence Canada
Environmental Justice Ministry of the United Church of Christ
FracTracker Alliance
FreshWater Accountability Project
Friends of the Earth
Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed
Friends of the San Juans
Friends of the Sawmill Wetlands
GAIA
Galveston Ornithological Society
Greater Akron Audubon Society
Green Cambridge
Green Newton
Greening Greater Racine
Greenpeace USA

Groundwork Rhode Island
Illinois PIRG
Inland Ocean Coalition
Iowa Recycling Association
Juanita High School Earth Corps (Green Team)
Kent Island Beach Cleanups KIBCU
Knights of Wildlife Conservation
Less Plastic Please
Little Falls Watershed Alliance
Los Angeles Waterkeeper
Maryland Legislative Coalition
Maryland PIRG
MASSPIRG
Middlesex Community College Sustainability Club
Minnesota River Valley Audubon Chapter
National Audubon Society
National Stewardship Action Council
NCPIRG Students
NJPIRG
No Waste Louisiana
Oceana
Oceanic Global
Oregon Environmental Council
Organizing for Plastic Alternatives
OSPIRG
PennEnvironment
PennPIRG
PIRG Students Florida
PIRGIM
Plastic Free Delaware, Inc.
Plastic Free QAC (Queen Anne's County)
Plastic Pollution Coalition
Post-Landfill Action Network
Progreso: Latino Progress
RE Sources
San Antonio Bay Estuarine Waterkeeper
Scubi Jew at Eckerd College

Spokane Zero Waste
Strategies For Ecology Education, Diversity and Sustainability FAU
Student Environmental Action Coalition
Suffolk Environmental Club
Surfrider DC
Surfrider Florida State University
Surfrider Foundation - Texas Coastal Bend Chapter
Texas Campaign for the Environment
Texas Physicians for Social Responsibility
TexPIRG
The Center for Oceanic Awareness, Research, and Education (COARE)
The Environmental Conservation Organization of UT Dallas
The Lands Council
The Last Beach Cleanup
The Last Plastic Straw
The Ocean Project
The Story of Stuff Project
Transition Howard County
Trash Free Maryland
Turtle Island Restoration Network
UPSTREAM
Ward 8 Woods Conservancy
Wimberley Valley Watershed Association
Wisconsin Environment
WISE
Worthington Hills Garden Club
WWU Students for Zero Waste
Zero Waste Strategies LLC
Zero Waste Washington

CC: Spencer Taylor