

TEAMSTERS NEWS

International Brotherhood

25 Louisiana Avenue, NW • Washington, DC 20001 • www.teamster.org

of Teamsters

202-624-6911 • fax: 202-624-6918

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Contact:

Galen Munroe (202) 624-6911

gmunroe@teamster.org

ACTIVISTS AT SHAREHOLDER MEETING SAY WHOLE FOODS IS BAD FOR THE PLANET

Sustainable Supply Chain Coalition Asks Whole Foods to Change Unsustainable Business Practices, Sign Pledge

(Vancouver, BC)--At the Whole Foods Market shareholder meeting in Vancouver, BC, the Sustainable Supply Chain Coalition, an alliance of environmental groups, food activist organizations and labor unions, rallied today in support of four shareholder resolutions and called for a change in Whole Foods Market, Inc. (NASDAQ:WFMI) and its supplier United Natural Foods Inc. (NASDAQ:UNFI) unsustainable business practices.

The coalition is upset over Whole Foods' recent actions which have highlighted the company's hypocrisy on the subject of sustainability and organic food—a major selling point for Whole Food consumers.

Whole Foods top management has denied the existence of climate change and violated an array of workers' rights. Whole Foods, which claims healthy food is its priority, is also guilty of selling food products that are not certifiably organic and instead labeled as natural—a technique used by corporations called “greenwashing” that gives consumers the misleading impression a product is organic.

“The recent actions taken by Whole Foods' management such as denying global warming and intimidating its workers has set the sustainability movement in an uproar that is making it a risk to shareholders and investors,” said Jamie Biggar, Chairman of the Board of the Sierra Club British Columbia. “The share price has fallen 30 percent over the last five years.”

“Whole Foods is alienating its consumer base,” said Ronnie Cummins, Executive Director of Organic Consumers Association. “Whole Foods customers will not stand for business policies that hurt workers, the environment, and dilute organic standards.”

“I am concerned about Whole Foods' expansion into Canada,” said Don McGill, Teamster Vice President, Canada. “Whole Foods workers do a great job but how can the Canadian workforce expect Whole Foods management to operate with respect for workers' rights when we have seen their violations in the United States?”

(MORE)

Page 2 of 2 – Activists at Shareholder Meeting Say Whole Foods is Bad for the Planet

Together, the coalition is asking Whole Foods Market and its supplier United Natural Foods Inc. (UNFI) to sign the "Sustainable Food Pledge" that would bring together key stakeholders to discuss making Whole Foods Market and its supplier UNFI a company based on sustainable principles that would protect the environment, food and workers within its supply chain.

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.4 million hardworking men and women in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico.

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