

# Coca-Cola Shareholders Demand Resolution on Chemical

April 29, 2011 | [Susanne Rust](#)

Coca-Cola shareholders are demanding the company disclose how it is addressing consumer concerns over a controversial chemical used in the epoxy linings of its beverage cans.

But the company is refusing to provide that information.

More than a quarter of the shareholders voted for the disclosure, as well as an outline for a plan to phase out the chemical, bisphenol A, from its products. Coke's annual meeting was held Wednesday in Atlanta.



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"While we are respectful of the proponents' requests [for a written report], we believe the report requested would not have provided additional or useful information to our shareowners beyond what is already publicly available on our website," said the company in a statement.

Coca-Cola's website states that "reliable scientific evidence" shows that bisphenol A – or BPA – levels in can linings are safe. It says the only commercially viable systems for lining cans contain BPA.

In 2004, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention found BPA in the urine of 93 percent of 2,500 Americans tested. It has been linked to neurological defects, diabetes, breast and prostate cancer and heart disease.

[Other food and beverage companies](#), such as H.J. Heinz, ConAgra, Campbell Soup, Nestle and General Mills, have either started or have promised to eliminate the chemical from their products.

Heinz has already eliminated the chemical in some of its products, and has publicly committed to removing the chemical entirely from all of its packaging.

"There is so much science out there that should raise concern about this chemical. For Coke to come out and say there is no problem whatsoever is ignorant and disingenuous," said Michael Passoff, a senior strategist with [As You Sow](#), a shareholder activist group that promotes corporate responsibility.

[As You Sow](#), along with two investment firms, introduced the resolution. According to Passoff, the same resolution was supported by 20 percent of shareholders last year.

"Usually 10 percent is enough to move a company to take action," he said. "But Coca-Cola's refusal to address this issue last year is why it is the only company targeted with a BPA container shareholder resolution again this year," Passoff said.

On Tuesday, the California Assembly Committee on Environmental Safety and Toxic Metals approved a bill that would ban the manufacture, sale or distribution of BPA in bottles, cans and food packaging products.