



**WHEREAS:**

Post-consumer packaging and printed paper comprises nearly half of U.S. landfill waste and is a significant consumer of natural resources, energy, and source of greenhouse gas emissions. Half of printed paper and packaging is landfilled or burned rather than recycled. Plastic packaging debris migrates to oceans where it damages fisheries, tourism and marine life. There is a growing link between ineffective waste management and plastic debris piling up in Earth's oceans and waterways where it kills and injures marine animals, transports invasive species, and poses a threat to human health.

The estimated market value of wasted packaging is \$11.4 billion. In the U.S., taxpayers pay to recycle packaging, but poor infrastructure and strapped municipal budgets have led to lagging recycling rates; the rate for aluminum packaging is 35%, glass 33%, and plastic just 12%. Further, use of non-recyclable flexible plastic packaging is growing at an alarming rate. Only 8% of polypropylene containers, the packaging used in our leading Yoplait brand yogurt, are recycled. Increased recycling provides a more efficient use of valuable resources, generates less pollution, and uses less energy than relying on dwindling virgin raw materials.

Producers should begin planning to take some responsibility for increasing recycling of packaging they place into commerce. More than 40 countries have shifted some or all of these costs onto producers. Producers control design and marketing decisions and are best positioned to reduce the environmental impact of product packaging by increasing recyclability of materials and managing and internalizing recycling costs. In its foreign operations, General Mills is already paying to recycle packaging in most of Europe and parts of Canada.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), a corporate and public policy that shifts accountability for financing recycling of materials from taxpayers to producers, is on the horizon. Two major brands, Coca-Cola Co. and Nestlé Waters NA, have called for producers to adopt EPR programs in the U.S. Legislation is pending in several states. Advance planning for the imposition of increased producer responsibility for packaging will reduce company costs, ensure continued high quality packaging, reduce wasted resources, and increase program efficiency.

The company acknowledges that developing a system to greatly increase recycling rates requires a joint effort by state and local governments, producers, and recycling experts. However, the company has not moved decisively to lead or help develop such an effort or addressed its own responsibility for post-consumer packaging.

**THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:**

Shareowners of General Mills request that the board of directors issue a report, at reasonable cost and omitting confidential information, addressing company responsibility for post-consumer product packaging and a plan for developing and participating in a system that will greatly increase packaging recycling.



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**SUPPORTING STATEMENT:**

Options reviewed in the report should include analyses of company-based actions for design changes that will increase recyclability of packaging materials and participation in development of EPR or similar systems with a goal of greatly increased U.S. recycling rates and reduced energy use and pollution.