



WHEREAS:

Product packaging is a significant consumer of natural resources and energy, and a major source of waste and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Half of U.S. printed paper and packaging, worth \$11.4 billion, is landfilled or burned rather than recycled. Packaging debris migrates to oceans where it damages fisheries, tourism and marine life. The U.S. packaging recycling rate for aluminum is only 35%, for glass 33% and for plastic just 12%.

Paper and packaging comprise 44% of U.S. landfill waste – the largest category of municipal solid waste. Nestle Waters North America says plastic bottles are the largest contributor to its carbon footprint; Coca-Cola Co. reports packaging is the largest part of the carbon footprint of several products. The energy needed to manufacture products and packaging accounts for 44% of total U.S. GHG emissions, according to an **analysis of U.S.** Environmental Protection Agency data. Decaying paper in landfills forms methane, a more potent greenhouse gas than carbon dioxide. Metal, paper and plastic packaging have large embodied energy and emissions profiles because of the high costs of processing raw materials.

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a corporate and public policy that shifts accountability for financing collection and recycling of materials from taxpayers and governments to producers. In more than 40 countries, corporate users of packaging are partly or fully financially responsible for post-consumer packaging. EPR programs in Belgium, Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands recover far higher rates of packaging than the U.S. EPR laws are firmly established in the U.S. for several product categories, with more than 70 such laws are in effect in 32 states – but not for packaging.

Producers control design and marketing decisions, and so are best positioned to reduce the overall environmental impact of product packaging and internalize costs. Ontario's EPR law prompted Walmart to work with other grocers to shift to more readily recyclable PET plastic packaging. Increased recycling of packaging can result in strong environmental benefits, more efficient use of materials, reduced extraction of natural resources, and fewer GHG and toxic emissions. EPR mandates can create new jobs and new materials markets. Nestle Waters and Coca-Cola have called for EPR packaging systems in the U.S.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

Shareowners of Whole Foods Market request that the board of directors issue a report at reasonable cost, omitting confidential information, by July 1, 2013 assessing the feasibility of adopting a policy of Extended Producer Responsibility for post-consumer product packaging as a means of increasing rates of packaging recycling, reducing carbon emissions and air and water pollution resulting from the company's business practices, and describing efforts by the company to implement this strategy.



SUPPORTING STATEMENT:

Proponents believe policy options reviewed in the report should include taking responsibility for post-consumer package recycling, and participating in development of broad producer financed EPR systems or similar systems that will greatly increase U.S. packaging recycling rates.