

Dunkin' Donuts is Going Green

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Dunkin' Donuts is throwing out its foam coffee cups. Dunkin' Brands Group, parent company of Dunkin' Donuts and Baskin-Robins, announced in its corporate social responsibility (CSR) report that it will phase out foam cups in the next two to three years and start testing a more eco-friendly paper cup with recycled content. During the transition, it will recycle the foam cups at restaurants it owns.

As You Sow, a nonprofit organization that promotes corporate responsibility through shareholder advocacy, has been pushing the company to improve the recyclability of its beverage packaging since initiating a shareholder dialogue with the company last year.



As You Sow advocated many of the actions announced by Dunkin', in particular the phase-out of foam cups.

"We are pleased that Dunkin' Donuts is beginning to take responsibility for reducing the health and environmental impacts of its foam cups," says Conrad MacKerron, senior vice president at **As You Sow**. "Promoting on-site recycling and improved recyclability are steps in the right direction."

MacKerron leads **As You Sow's** Waste program, which is encouraging quick-service food brands including Dunkin' Donuts, McDonald's, and YUM! Brands to recycle their post-consumer food and beverage packaging on-site. Dunkin's actions represent the most recent success from these dialogues, following the 2012 move by McDonald's to test a non-foam coffee cup. MacKerron pressed Dunkin' and McDonald's to phase out polystyrene foam because of its negative impact on the environment.

Polystyrene foam is difficult to recycle and is pervasive in the marine environment, carried through storm drains to the ocean. There, it breaks down into indigestible pellets which poison birds and marine animals. It is also one of the most common types of debris found on beaches. Styrene, used in the production of polystyrene, also carries occupational safety risks. The International Agency for Research on Cancer classified it as a possible human carcinogen and several epidemiologic studies suggest an association between occupational styrene exposure and increased risk of leukemia and lymphoma.

Although the move away from polystyrene-based cups is a positive step, Dunkin' has much more to do.

"Dunkin' will provide cup recycling only at the 26 stores it owns nationwide, leaving thousands of franchise locations with unrecycled cups," says MacKerron, adding that he hopes "the company can incentivize its customers and franchisees to participate in recycling not only cups but also food packaging."

Currently, Pret A Manger is the only quick-service food chain to recycle a range of post-consumer food and

drink packaging on-site. Starbucks has committed to recycle all its paper and plastic cups in company-owned stores by 2015. McDonald's has not yet announced the results of its pilot project that tested replacing foam cups with paper ones.

As You Sow's Waste program encourages major consumer brands to take responsibility for their post-consumer packaging. Previously, it obtained commitments from Coca-Cola Co., PepsiCo, and Nestlé Waters N.A. to increase recycling of their beverage bottles and cans.