



WHEREAS:

Nanotechnology is the science of manipulating matter at the molecular scale to build structures known as nanomaterials. One nanometer is approximately one-millionth the length of a grain of sand. The novel properties of nanomaterials offer new opportunities for food industry applications, however these same properties may also result in greater toxicity for human health and the environment.

Because of their small size, nanoparticles are more likely to enter cells, tissues, and organs where they may interfere with normal cellular function and cause damage and cell death. Nanomaterials such as silver and titanium dioxide have been found to be highly toxic to cells in laboratory studies. Recent research on the ingestion of inorganic nanoparticles has raised concerns regarding toxicity to humans and the environment. Studies show that nanoparticles less than 300 nanometers in size are able to pass through cell membranes in organisms; that nanomaterials can cause DNA and chromosomal damage, organ damage, inflammation, brain damage, and genital malformations, among other harms.

Given recent scientific findings, proponents believe companies that use nanomaterials in food products may face significant liability and reputational risks. In 2008, the insurance giant, Swiss Re, noted that “what makes nanotechnology completely new from the point of view of insuring against risk is the unforeseeable nature of the risks it entails and the recurrent and cumulative losses it could lead to” In 2011, Gen Re noted, “There are, at this time, dozens of studies associating exposure to various nanomaterials with adverse health effects.”

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has yet to enact regulations applicable to nanomaterials in foods. FDA’s Guidance document, however, warns: “We are not aware of any food ingredient. . . intentionally engineered on the nanometer scale for which there are generally available safety data sufficient to serve as the foundation for a determination that the use of a food ingredient . . . is GRAS [Generally Recognized As Safe].”

Independent laboratory testing in 2013 found titanium dioxide nanoparticles in Dunkin’s white powdered donuts. Dunkin Brands uses titanium dioxide in several food products, including glazed and cream-filled donuts. Peer-reviewed data shows that food-grade titanium dioxide contains nanomaterials (Peters 2014; Weir 2012; Westerhoff 2014).

Proponents believe that the best way to protect the public, and shareholder value, is to avoid using nanomaterials until and unless they have been subject to robust evaluation and demonstrated to be safe for human health and the environment, or to clearly label all products that contain nanomaterials.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

Shareholders request that the Board publish, by November 1, 2015, at reasonable cost and excluding proprietary information, a report on Dunkin’s use of nanomaterials in the company’s food products or packaging. The report should identify products or packaging that currently contain nanomaterials; the purpose of such use; and actions management is taking to reduce or eliminate risk, such as eliminating or disclosing the use of nanomaterials until they are proven safe through long-term testing.