



WHEREAS: Amazon.com says it is “constantly looking for ways to further reduce our environmental impact”, yet continues to use polystyrene-based foam packing materials in e-commerce while competitors such as Dell and Ikea are phasing them out.

The Sustainable Packaging Coalition defines sustainable packaging as “beneficial, safe and healthy for individuals and communities throughout its life cycle.” The International Agency for Research on Cancer has determined that styrene, used in the production of polystyrene, is a possible human carcinogen. Epidemiologic studies suggest an association between occupational styrene exposure and an increased risk of leukemia and lymphoma.

Polystyrene foam packaging is among the top items found in ocean beach cleanups. Foam packing materials are rarely recycled and break down into small indigestible pellets which animals mistake for food. Ingestion can result in death as demonstrated in birds, turtles, and whales. Foam has also been shown to transfer hazardous chemicals to wildlife. Plastics absorb toxics like PCBs, pesticides, and metals from water, transferring them to the marine food web and potentially to human diets, increasing risk of adverse effects to wildlife and humans.

Foam may pose a higher risk to marine animals than other plastics due to its hazardous constituent chemicals and research showing it can accumulate high concentrations of water borne toxins in a short time frame. Polystyrene has caused decreased reproduction in laboratory populations of oysters and fish.

Antigua and Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, France, Guyana, Haiti, Rwanda, Taiwan and states in India and Malaysia have enacted bans on foam packaging. More than 100 U.S. cities or counties banned or restricted foam packaging. Amazon needs to explore options including phase out in advance of further regulatory developments.

Fresh waters are also threatened by plastics like polystyrene. A recent study of 29 rivers flowing into the Great Lakes found that every sample carried microplastics, often in concentrations far larger than detected in the lakes themselves. The problem can be exacerbated in developing countries with less sophisticated solid waste management systems.

The company says it is “always driving improvements in the sustainability of packaging across Amazon’s supply chain, starting with our own packaging” yet continues to use foam packing materials. E-commerce competitors Ikea and Dell have made public commitments to phase out use of foam in favor of safer materials like molded pulp.

BE IT RESOLVED THAT: Shareowners of Amazon.com request that the board of directors issue a report at reasonable cost, omitting confidential information, assessing the environmental impacts of continued use of foam packing materials, including quantifying the amount that could reach the environment, and assessing the potential for increased risk of adverse health effects to marine animals and humans.

SUPPORTING STATEMENT: Proponents believe the report should also include assessment of the reputational, financial, and operational risks associated with continued use of foam packing materials and a timeline to phase out use if possible. We believe the requested report is in the best interest of Amazon.com and its shareholders. Leadership in this area will protect our brand.