

Growing Number of Coca-Cola Investors Call for BPA Action

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ATLANTA, GA — For the second year in a row more than 20 percent of Coca-Cola shareholders asked the company to disclose its plans related to bisphenol A (BPA), a chemical used in metal can liners that has been banned or phased out of many baby products.

Advocacy group [As You Sow](#) had introduced a resolution, supported by 26 percent of shareholders today at an annual investor meeting, that called on Coca-Cola to issue a report detailing what it is doing to adopt or support the development of BPA-free can liners, and what risks it faces by continuing to use BPA. A similar resolution last year gain 22 percent of investors.

BPA has been linked to numerous health problems in laboratory studies, and the chemical has been banned from select uses by a [handful of countries](#) and [eight states](#). Regulations have so far focused on baby bottles, infant formula and other products intended for use by babies and children.

"It's at state, federal, international levels," said Michael Passoff, [As You Sow](#) senior strategist. "We see all this regulation on BPA in other products as a sign of what is going to happen to BPA in cans."

Religious institutional investors and investment firms Domini Social Investments and Trillium Asset Management Corporation also supported the Coca-Cola BPA resolution. Coca-Cola is the only company that [As You Sow](#) went after with a BPA resolution this year, noting that many other consumer food companies [have been more open](#) about what they doing to replace BPA or at least note what risks they face from potential regulation.

"What we see is a lot of movement among large can movers to find an alternative," Passoff said.

[In its Seeking Safer Packaging report](#) last year, [As You Sow](#) lists the steps some food and retail companies are doing to replace BPA or fund research into alternatives. While canned food and soup companies mainly received A, B and C scores, PepsiCo got a D-, and Coca-Cola earned an F.

"They are the biggest beverage company out there," Passoff said, talking about what it would mean if Coca-Cola was more supportive of the search for BPA-free alternatives. "It's just like Walmart can push the market."

In the sustainability section of Coca-Cola's website, it touches on BPA in an ["Addressing Your Questions" list](#), stating, "We are working with third-parties that produce can liners to explore possibilities that include alternatives to liners with BPA. Currently, the only commercially viable lining systems for the mass production of aluminum beverage cans contain BPA."

The company has said it will not be taking any action based on the BPA vote, saying in a statement, "While we are respectful of the proponents' requests, we believe the report requested would not have provided additional or useful information to our shareowners beyond what is already publicly available on our website. Our top priority is to ensure the safety and quality of our products and packaging through rigorous standards that meet or exceed government requirements. If we had any concerns about the safety of our packaging, we would not use it."

Coca-Cola can - CC license by [OMG! Zombies!](#)/Flickr