

Target says it will phase out polystyrene packaging

Retailer reaches agreement with As You Sow regarding online shipments.

Recycling Today Staff
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Minneapolis-based retailer [Target Corp.](#) has “agreed to engage” with its supply chain regarding phasing out polystyrene foam packaging from its online retailing operations, according to the Oakland, California-based nonprofit organization [As You Sow](#).



[As You Sow](#) says that as a result of the company’s willingness to work with its “value chain and industry peers to discuss replacing foam with less harmful alternatives,” it has subsequently agreed to withdraw a shareholder proposal to Target that had asked the company to phase out polystyrene in its e-commerce operations. An alternative material for such applications is [molded pulp](#), often made from recycled paper.

Polystyrene foam used for direct-to-consumer packing materials is rarely recycled, [As You Sow](#) says. “More than 100 U.S. cities or counties and nine countries have banned or restricted foam packaging in various forms,” states the group.

[As You Sow](#) filed shareholder proposals with Target and with Amazon.com, asking the companies to assess the reputational, financial and operational risks associated with continued use of foam packing materials and a timeline to phase out its use.

“We are pleased that Target has committed to work with corporate partners and peers to press for alternatives to environmentally harmful foam,” says [Conrad MacKerron](#), [As You Sow](#) senior vice president.

Dell and Ikea previously announced reduction or phase out of polystyrene foam as a packing material, adds [MacKerron](#). McDonald’s Corp. switched from foam to paper cups in 2013 after a shareholder engagement with [As You Sow](#).

[As You Sow](#) says its corporate engagements are part of an initiative “to move companies using disposable plastics to recycle, redesign, reduce or phase them out as quickly as possible.”