

More Coca-Cola Shareholders Want Info on Chemicals in the Can

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An increasing number of shareholders in the Coca-Cola Co. would like the world's largest beverage firm to report on how it's addressing the risk of Bisphenol A in its beverage cans, the shareholder advocacy group **As You Sow** reported Wednesday.

Twenty-six percent of Coca-Cola shareholders said they were concerned about the company's use of BPA this year versus 22% last year, when **As You Sow** first introduced its resolution concerning Bisphenol A, or BPA, to shareholders.



BPA is a chemical that is often used in the liners of metal food and drink cans. Studies have shown BPA can leach from cans into food. Dozens of laboratory studies have linked BPA exposure to breast and prostate cancer, infertility, early puberty in girls, obesity and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 93% of Americans have detectable levels of BPA in their bodies.

Coca-Cola sells almost 570 billion beverage servings annually in a variety of packages, including cans.

"For the resolution to get 26%, that's very good. It shows it's getting mainstream support, not just the support of green or social investors," said Michael Passoff, senior strategist for San Francisco-based **As You Sow**, which introduced the resolution with various investment firms, including Domini Social Investments and Trillium Asset Management Corp.

Coca-Cola spokesman Kent Landers noted that 74% of company shareholders voted against the resolution. "The safety and quality of our products is of the utmost importance to our company and has been an enduring obligation for 125 years," he wrote in an email.

He added that BPA is used worldwide in the packaging of thousands of products and is the industry standard for the lining of aluminum and steel food and beverage containers; BPA guards against contaminants and extends a product's shelf life.

He said Coca-Cola is monitoring BPA research and regulatory developments and is also investigating BPA alternatives. "Any new material, assuming it has met all necessary safety reviews and regulatory approvals," he said, "also would have to meet our safety, quality and functional requirements."

-- Susan Carpenter

Photo: A visitor to a Coca-Cola factory in Indonesia sips from a Coke. Credit: Bea Wiharta / Reuters