

Mr. Randall B. Edeker, Chairman, president and CEO
Hy-Vee
1700 Valley West Drive
West Des Moines, Iowa 50266

Dear Mr. Randall Edeker:

Most consumers want to avoid single-use plastic packaging. However, one cannot shop at Hy-Vee without acquiring a large amount of plastic packaging in the process. According to [a recent poll](#) by the international non-profit Oceana, the vast majority of American voters (86%) are concerned about single-use plastics, and 81% of them support enacting policies at the federal, state and local levels to reduce plastic.

We write today to urge you to commit to shifting Hy-Vee away from single-use plastic packaging to a system of bulk products, reusables, and, where necessary, products packaged in single-use containers made from glass, metal or paper, all of which can be recycled successfully for multiple reuses. Switch from plastic bags to reusable or backyard compostable Crown Poly bags M_nahin@crownpoly.com

[Plastics recycling is largely a myth](#). According to the nonprofit organizations, Beyond Plastics and The Last Beach Clean up, [the recycling rate for plastics here in the United States was just 5-6% in 2021](#) - a figure that was then confirmed by the U.S. [Department of Energy](#).

It's important to note that even the small amount of plastic that is counted as "recycled" may not be recycled as exports overseas are marked as recycled without any proof that it has occurred. Furthermore, plastics are not "recycled", a process in which a material is turned back into a product of equal value many times. Plastics are only "downcycled" - usually turned into fibers for carpet or fleece - and are [only reused once or twice more, at most](#) before ending up in a landfill, incinerator or ocean.

It's important to understand that the so-called "advanced recycling" and "chemical recycling" processes that are being promoted by the plastics, chemical and packaging industries do not recycle plastic; they simply turn plastic into low-grade fuel to be burned, further harming our health and accelerating climate change. "Chemical recycling" is not a solution to our plastic pollution crisis.

Plastics break down into smaller and smaller pieces which then work their way into our air, water, soil and the bodies of fish, wildlife and all of us humans. A recent study by Australia's University of New Castle found that [we're all consuming roughly a credit card's worth of plastic each WEEK](#). **That's a serious problem because plastics can be endocrine disruptors and early studies have shown that [they increase our risk of obesity, cancer, infertility, diabetes, and developmental disorders](#)**, at a minimum.

Between nine and 15 million metric tons of plastic enter our ocean each year. Scientists predict that there will be one pound of plastic in the ocean for every three pounds of fish by 2025 and [more plastic trash in the ocean than fish by 2050](#).

In the meantime, [seabirds are dying at alarming rates](#) with bellies full of plastic, [dead whales are washing up on beaches with stomachs full of plastic](#) on a regular basis in countries around the world, and if you haven't watched the deeply painful video of the poor [sea turtle with the plastic straw lodged in its nose](#), you should spend three minutes doing so.

Plastic packaging is also a significant contributor to climate change. Plastics are made from chemicals and fossil fuels. Their creation both relies on and perpetuates the extraction of oil and gas which is the primary cause of our climate crisis and which we must end in short order if we hope to continue to enjoy life on this planet. Plastics in the U.S. are on track to contribute more greenhouse emissions than coal plants by 2030. You can find more details about the relationship between plastics and climate change in the 2021 report by Beyond Plastics titled [*Plastic Is the New Coal*](#).

Plastic is also an environmental justice issue. Plastic manufacturing facilities are disproportionately located in communities of color, as are both landfills and incinerators. All of these facilities threaten the health of residents and diminish their quality of life.

There is evidence that **some of the chemicals used in plastic packaging (for food, especially) are toxic to humans**. One of these chemicals is [PFAS which is often used in food packaging](#). There are thousands of chemicals used in plastic packaging, some of which like BPA and PFAS, we already know are toxic, but there are thousands more chemicals about whose safety we know nothing.

[Studies have shown that bottled water contains significantly more microplastic particles than tap water does](#). Although the impact of microplastics contamination on human bodies is not yet well-studied, it seems very likely that [these products are harmful to your customers' health](#). This is not a risk that we believe you should continue to expose your customers to.

For all of these reasons, we believe that doing **business as usual is no longer acceptable**.

As a leading retailer, you have a responsibility to STOP carrying products packaged in single-use plastic. Alternatives exist. You just need to embrace them.

We call on Hy-Vee to reduce its single-use plastic by:

1. Switching to bulk bins and dispensers for dry goods, produce, cleaning and self-care products.
2. Reviewing your inventory and switching to products that are sold in cans, glass, cardboard and paper in cases where you must continue to sell single-use packaged products.
3. Installing purified water refilling stations for customers.
4. Ceasing the sale of bottled water and other drinks bottled in plastic immediately, and replacing them with beverages sold in glass bottles and cans only.
5. Reducing the use of plastic bags at check-out counters by making them available for a fee and urging your customers to bring their own bags. The ALDI supermarket chain has used this approach for decades with proven success, largely as a cost-saving measure.

We urge you to set clear targets and timelines for this process and to make them public and provide regular, annual updates on your progress.

In the meantime, our environmental conscience and concerns about plastic's toxicity for our health are forcing us to forgo buying many items in your store. We hope you will make the changes we have outlined above soon to enable us to begin doing more of our shopping at your store.

Thanks for taking the time to consider our requests. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

