

Burger King announces global ban of toxic “forever chemicals” in food packaging

RBI commits to eliminating PFAS in food packaging by 2025 in all stores worldwide; Health advocates urge Congress to pass federal ban

WASHINGTON, DC, USA, March 24, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Today, Restaurant Brands International (RBI) [announced](#) that it will ban toxic PFAS “forever chemicals” in food packaging globally by 2025. RBI—which owns Burger King, Popeyes, and Tim Hortons—is one of the world’s largest quick service restaurant companies with 27,000 restaurants in more than 100 countries.



The company stated: “As a next step in our product stewardship journey, the Burger King, Tim Hortons and Popeyes brands have required that any added perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) be phased out from all approved, guest-facing packaging materials globally by the end of 2025 or sooner.” More details are available [on their website](#) under “Eliminating Added PFAS.”

RBI’s announcement follows a multi-year campaign to phase out PFAS from retail food packaging, led by Toxic-Free Future. Their actions come nearly one year after restaurant competitors made similar commitments, including McDonald’s and Wendy’s following Toxic-Free Future’s 2018 and 2020 reports testing food packaging materials, including wrappers from Burger King. The announcement also comes on the same day as a Consumer Reports study that tested the packaging of dozens of major fast food chains including Burger King. Health advocates nationwide have urged RBI to take action against PFAS in its food packaging since the release of the 2020 investigation that found indications of PFAS in Burger King’s Whopper packaging, among other products.

In response, the following statements were made:

“This new commitment from Burger King, Popeyes, and Tim Hortons is the latest nail in the coffin for PFAS in food packaging,” said Mike Schade, director of Mind the Store, a program of Toxic-

Free Future. “We appreciate Burger King taking this critical action following our campaign efforts. But there’s no time to waste in phasing out PFAS. Toxic pollution from these forever chemicals has been impacting customers and frontline communities for far too long. Retailers like Burger King should eliminate these chemicals by 2023 and ensure substitutes are safe and reusable.”

“Seven states and 21 food giants have banned PFAS in food packaging. Congress must take action to protect all of us by passing bipartisan legislation (S. 3169, H.R. 6026) to take PFAS off the menu nationwide,” said Liz Hitchcock, director of Safer Chemicals Healthy Families, Toxic-Free Future’s federal policy program.

“This is a critically important step towards reducing PFAS exposures to prevent them from building up in women and breast milk,” said Dr. Sheela Sathyanarayana, professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington and Seattle Children’s Research Institute. “These types of decisions will help protect our most vulnerable populations, and we hope others can take similar actions”

"The presence of PFAS chemicals in food packaging is one more avenue of exposure to these dangerous chemicals that North Carolina families cannot afford." said Stephanie Schweickert, senior campaign organizer of NC Conservation Network. "As ranking member of the Senate HELP Committee, Senator Burr has the opportunity to reign in further impacts by supporting legislation to end the use of PFAS chemicals in food packaging."

"State legislators across the country working on PFAS policies just got another example of how possible it is to turn off the PFAS tap in the face of public demand," said Cindy Luppi, New England director of Clean Water Action. "This news builds on PFAS precedents set by over seven states and is also incredibly exciting for the grassroots leaders who visited their local Burger King and asked for change."

“We are glad to see Burger King catching up to its peers by making a commitment to end the use of PFAS in its packaging,” said Ariana Guilak, environmental health program coordinator of As You Sow. “Investors expect food companies to be constantly innovating to make their products safer and more sustainable, and we look forward to the company’s work to identify safe, sustainable packaging alternatives.”

“We’re pleased that Burger King plans to phase out the use of toxic PFAS chemicals in the packaging they use for burgers and other menu items,” said Brian Ronholm, director of food policy at Consumer Reports. “Your food shouldn’t come with a side order of forever chemicals when you pick up takeout at your favorite restaurant. We hope today’s announcement will prompt other fast-food chains to make a commitment to protect public health and end the use of dangerous PFAS chemicals in their food packaging.”

ABOUT TOXIC-FREE FUTURE'S CAMPAIGN TO PHASE OUT PFAS IN RETAIL FOOD PACKAGING
Since 2018, Toxic Free Future’s Mind the Store program and its partners from across the country

have been working to drive the nation's largest grocery, fast-food, and fast-casual chains to ban PFAS in food packaging.

The campaign launched with more than 75 letters requesting action to address toxic PFAS sent to the top grocery and fast-food chains in North America, followed by product testing investigations at grocery store chains in 2018 and 2019. In the summer of 2020, the campaign released a follow-up study, *Packaged in Pollution*, finding nearly half of all food packaging samples tested positive for fluorine above the screening level indicating the likely presence of PFAS, including in the packaging of McDonald's Big Mac and Burger King's Whopper.

The campaign also launched online petitions signed by tens of thousands of consumers; published report cards analyzing retailer chemical policies; hosted actions at fast-food chains nationwide; published factsheets on alternatives and guidance for implementing restrictions on PFAS; engaged investors; co-authored a peer-reviewed study led by scientists at Toxic-Free Future, the University of Washington, and Indiana University finding PFAS in breast milk and an original investigative report tracing the toxic path of PFAS; and released a new campaign mascot, Polluted Polly, to inspire actions that break the toxic lifecycle of PFAS

In response to the campaign, 21 retailers selling food or food packaging announced steps to reduce or eliminate PFAS in food packaging at more than 100,000 stores, which includes Ahold Delhaize, Albertsons, Amazon.com, Burger King, Cava, Chipotle, Freshii, McDonald's, Panera Bread, Popeyes, Sweetgreen, Tim Hortons, Trader Joe's, Wendy's, and Whole Foods Market.

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