

Students Against Coke

A Registered Student Organization at The Ohio State University
70 West 11th Ave., Rm. 826, Columbus, OH 43210
Website: sac.osu.edu



«Title» «Name» «LName»

«Address»

«Address2»

«City»

Dear «Title» «LName»,

Ohio State University's motto is "Education for Citizenship," and we, the undersigned, choose to take it seriously. As members of the OSU community, we find it especially disturbing when a business enterprise that claims to be a "responsible corporate citizen" turns out to be an international corporate outlaw, bent on exploiting OSU's honorable reputation.

Such is clearly the case with respect to the 10-year, \$30 million "sole supplier" contract between The Coca-Cola Company and OSU that will expire in June. Again and again, the intended beneficiaries of Coca-Cola's "generosity" — especially student organizations and programs — have been disappointed and deceived as it became clear that the value of what was "given" represented only a small fraction of what was taken away.

Meanwhile, there has been a growing awareness about Coca-Cola's deplorable record of labor and human rights violations and environmental abuses around the world. The beverage giant's involvement in the systematic intimidation, kidnapping, torture and murder of union leaders at its Colombian bottling plants is only one example of the kind of pain and suffering Coke has inflicted upon people and communities. In India, Mexico, El Salvador and elsewhere, Coke's overexploitation and pollution of scarce water resources has caused irreparable harm to ecosystems, turned farmlands into wastelands, and deprived millions of access to clean, potable water.

These and other greed-driven outrages on Coke's part are the reason why some 48 colleges and universities — including Rutgers University, New York University, DePaul University and Oberlin College — have removed Coke products from their campuses.

In New York, legislators have introduced bills requiring the state comptroller "to pull pension money out of companies like Coca-Cola..." (*New York Post* 7/24/07), which do business in Sudan. And Texas Republican Governor Rick Perry "signed a bill... directing the Teachers Retirement System and Employees Retirement System to get rid of holdings in companies doing business in Sudan because of atrocities in Darfur" (*New York Times*, 7/19/07).

Coca-Cola and its two largest U.S. "bottling partners" have been dropped from the Broad Market Social Index (BMSI) list of socially responsible companies prepared by KLD Research & Analytics, an independent investment research firm that is considered a world leader in defining corporate responsibility standards. The *Atlanta Journal*

Constitution (7/19/06) reported, “KLD based its decision on a number of issues — labor and human rights in Colombia, environmental issues in India...” This led to the divestiture of 1.25 million shares of The Coca-Cola Company’s stock by TIAA–CREF’s (Teachers Insurance and Annuity Assn.–College Retirement Equity Fund) \$9 billion CREF Social Choice Account, the nation’s largest socially screened fund for individual investors.

TIAA–CREF also divested its holdings in Coca-Cola Enterprises (CCE), Ohio State University’s beverage provider, because it was also dropped from the BMSI for not meeting the criteria as a socially responsible company. It should be noted that Coca-Cola Enterprises shares board members with Colombia’s largest bottler, Coca-Cola FEMSA, which is a defendant in human rights abuse lawsuits filed in 2001 and 2006. These lawsuits charge that Coke bottlers in Colombia “contracted with, or otherwise directed, paramilitary security forces that utilized extreme violence and murdered, tortured, unlawfully detained or otherwise silenced trade union leaders.”

Thus, it should come as no surprise that over the past several years, and again this year, Coca-Cola’s CEO and board members have opposed every shareholder resolution aimed at investigating allegations of human rights abuses by its bottlers and establishing codes of conduct and committees that would prevent human rights and environmental abuses throughout its system.

We urge you to support OSU students and faculty in their efforts to ban the sale of Coca-Cola products on campus and to make certain that the OSU administration refrains from entering into any future contracts with Coke. Now as never before, our University will be judged by the company it keeps — therefore, Coca-Cola and its bottlers must be kept at a distance until they clean up their acts. Please express your concerns to OSU President E. Gordon Gee (Gordon.gee@osu.edu, 614-292-2424 or 205 Bricker Hall, 190 North Oval Mall, Columbus, OH 43210) and send a copy of your correspondence to Students Against Coke (klatka.2@osu.edu).

We are enclosing a DVD and literature that document some of Coke’s crimes and unethical conduct. Much more information can be found at the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke’s website, www.KillerCoke.org. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to contact Eddie Klatka, coordinator of the OSU organization Students Against Coke (440-821-8150, klatka.2@osu.edu, www.sac.osu.edu), or Ray Rogers, director of the Campaign to Stop Killer Coke (718-852-2808, StopKillerCoke@aol.com). Be assured that we will respond promptly.

Thank you for your attention to our serious concerns about protecting the integrity and reputation of Ohio State University.

Sincerely,

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