

# COMPUTER TAKE ← BACK CAMPAIGN

Take it back

Make it clean

Recycle responsibly

February 22, 2007

Vice President Al Gore  
2100 West End Avenue  
Nashville TN 37203

Dear Vice President Gore:

When we met with you in San Francisco in April 2006, we discussed our concerns that Apple was lagging behind its competitors in responding to key efforts on the environment. At that meeting, you promised to leverage your roles as an Apple Board member and as a friend of Steve Jobs to spur progress at Apple. You also pledged to have increased communication with stakeholders such as the shareholder and NGO representatives in attendance.

Within weeks of our meeting, and in advance of the annual shareholder meeting, Steve Jobs announced that the company would offer to recycle an old computer for consumers who bought a new Mac. A few weeks later, shareholders gave an unprecedented level of support to the recycling resolution on their ballot. At that meeting, Steve Jobs gave you credit for the progress on environmental issues at Apple.

However, since then, appears to be stalled. While Apple has launched its takeback program, it has done little to promote it and still has set no public recycling goals – a step that shows a company actually wants to make recycling happen (not just say they offer it). Apple has not yet announced any timeline for phasing out the worst toxic materials such as persistent and bioaccumulative substances, including PVC plastic and brominated flame retardants (BFRs). In fact, Dell has publicly committed to eliminate all remaining uses of PVC and BFRs in new products by 2009. Apple has not announced any change in its position against producer takeback public policy, at a time when we are seeing a groundswell of state legislation on the topic. Discussions of federal legislative approaches have a much higher profile than a year ago as well. Also troubling is that Apple has not responded to the Computer TakeBack Campaign's Report Card survey. We are sending a letter to the company to give them one last chance to respond. If Apple does not respond, CTBC will have to rely on the information available on the Apple website, which is rather scant compared to other companies.

As you probably know, Apple's lack of continuous improvement has resulted in Greenpeace ranking Apple dead last in performance on toxics and recycling in their latest Guide for Greener Electronics, which rates IT and mobile phone companies.

From our point of view, the pending release of the iPhone highlights the lack of continued progress. With the iPhone, Apple has an opportunity to put greener products on the market from the inception of this new product line. Unfortunately, the iPhone has

the same design problem that the iPod had when it was released. The battery cannot be replaced when it wears out. The challenges of battery life are likely compounded by all the features of the promised products and the slender design.

Consumers who spend \$500 to \$600 on the product will not be pleased to learn that they have bought a disposable phone because they cannot replace the battery when it dies. Members of the tech press have already been writing about this problem with the iPhone. Here's what Brian Dipert, a writer for the electronics engineers publication EDN wrote:

“By burying a limited-life battery within its widget, Apple's built in a guaranteed replacement requirement....one that under normal usage will conveniently occur *prior* to the end of the required two-year service contract with Cingular.”

This design flaw of the iPod resulted in an embarrassing public relations situation for Apple when New York-based filmmakers put up a creative short film of their efforts to inform consumers by spray-painting a message on iPod posters throughout the city. Apple has an opportunity to truly design differently – for sustainability rather than disposability - but the company doesn't seem to be geared to seizing that initiative yet.

This Spring, Apple shareholders will once again vote on shareholder proposals on sustainability issues. The two resolutions submitted require the Board to issue reports on making Apple electronics less toxic and improving Apple's recycling programs (see attached). Because you are a Board member of Apple Inc. and the principal in a socially responsible investment firm, we hope that you will consider the reputational risks to the company of its lagging performance relative to its competitors in the sector. **We hope that you will lead efforts to have the Board to support these resolutions and push the company to go much further than what the resolutions require.**

We know that Dell Board members are briefed regularly on its sustainability initiatives, including an in-person briefing at least once a year at Board meetings. Apple has not revealed to us whether their Board is similarly engaged in these issues. If not, it's time for the Board to step up to the plate and provide strong guidance to the company on these issues. Here are some of the outstanding issues ripe for Board consideration:

- Meet or exceed Dell's commitment to responsibly recycle all Dell products on the worldwide market for free and set ambitious public goals for recycling
- Adopt of the precautionary policy
- Commit to phase out of all brominated flame retardants and PVC by a date certain and commit to phase out persistent bioaccumulative toxins with safer substitutes
- Support public policy to establish producer takeback recycling programs

The lack of transparency at Apple is a problem for us and for the company. With NGOs, Apple's usual path is to stonewall organizations that raise concerns. We had hoped that after the meeting we had with you last April, this would change, but it has not. It is surprising to many that, even in the height of our pressure campaign with Dell, company continued to dialog with us but that Apple refuses to do so.

At this point, we are beginning to regret that we agreed to meet with you last year on a confidential basis. You asked that we keep this meeting confidential, and trust that you would work behind the scenes to advance the issues and follow up with us on the progress. But progress on the issues seems to have stalled, and we have had no follow-up on this dialogue. We have requested follow-up meetings with you over the past few months (as have the staff at As You Sow), which have been denied. So we are now urgently asking you to meet with us and other key stakeholders. We would like to hear back from you on this by March 1. If we can't continue the dialogue we started last year, then we will need to make the discussion much more public in advance of the shareholder meeting and other upcoming opportunities.

In our view, key Apple decision-makers have yet to see the business value in making sustainability a central guiding principle. We remain convinced that if Apple's creative power was harnessed for sustainability, the company could easily surpass the gains that other companies have made.


Here are some big picture questions that you as a Boardmember should pose and answer:

- Could it be that making this shift is easier than putting out the innovative products Apple is so well known for?
- Why is it that Dell is the first and so far only IT company offering carbon offsets to their customers for the energy consumed during the life of the product?
- Why is it that Dell and HP have set up stakeholder engagement processes to work on creating leadership plans on climate change and supply chain management, but Apple stonewalls those that could be a sounding board for change?

You have been an extremely effective advocate for change on global warming and for environmental issues more generally. However, the on-going controversy with Apple, which has now spread worldwide with the involvement of Greenpeace International, threatens to frustrate a key global environmental initiative. Of course, there are clear climate change benefits if we improve the rates of reuse and recycling of electronics and if we phase out toxic materials some of which also contribute to climate change. We believe your leadership skills are still urgently needed to align Apple with these priorities.

We look forward to meeting with you at your earliest possible convenience. Please contact Robin Schneider at 512-326-5655 to discuss dates that would work for you.

Sincerely,



Ted Smith  
CTBC Chair  
Silicon Valley Toxics Coalition



Robin Schneider  
CTBC Vice Chair  
Texas Campaign for the Environment