



GREENPEACE

Backgrounder - April 2005

Kimberly-Clark: Flushing Forests Down the Toilet

Contacts: Greenpeace Canada: Richard Brooks, 416-573-7209 (cell)
Greenpeace U.S.: Pamela Wellner, 415-730-0105 (cell)
Natural Resources Defense Council: Susan Casey-Lefkowitz, 202-289-2366

Kimberly-Clark is cutting down ancient forests, such as Canada's boreal forest, to make disposable tissue paper products including Kleenex brand products. By manufacturing toilet paper, facial tissue, napkins and paper towels from freshly cut trees instead of post-consumer recycled fiber, the company has earned a reputation as a major destroyer of our planet's remaining natural forests.

The World's Largest Tissue Product Manufacturer

Kimberly-Clark is a (U.S.) \$13.6 billion company, headquartered in Dallas, Texas, with offices, factories and mills in 38 countries. Its products are sold in 150 countries. The largest tissue product manufacturer in the world, Kimberly-Clark produces the well-known Kleenex brand facial tissue, toilet paper and napkins in Canada and the United States, and Scott, Viva and Cottonelle tissue products in the United States. Kimberly-Clark also produces an extensive line of commercial tissue products for businesses, institutions and governments. Kimberly-Clark is traded on the New York Stock Exchange (ticker symbol: KMB).

Kimberly-Clark Uses Virgin Fiber Straight from Forests

In North America, less than 19 percent of the pulp that Kimberly-Clark uses as raw material for its disposable tissue products (toilet paper, facial tissue, napkins and paper towels) comes from recycled sources and much of this recycled pulp is used its commercial line of products. In fact, many of its brands sold in grocery stores, such as Kleenex and Scott (in the U.S. only), are made from 100 percent virgin tree fiber. In 2003, Kimberly-Clark required 2,811,000 short tons of virgin fiber to produce its tissue paper products globally.

Canada's Boreal Forest Pays the Price

Canada's boreal forest is an ancient forest that stretches across the country. Mostly public land, the forest is one of the last remaining intact forests in the world. The boreal forest is home to hundreds of wide-ranging wildlife species, including moose, lynx, grizzly and brown bears, wolves and caribou, a species at risk. Eagles, hawks, owls, 30 percent of North American songbirds, and 40 percent of North American waterfowl nest in its forests and wetlands. It is a diverse and awe-inspiring landscape of granite outcrops, lakes, rivers and marshes interspersed with pine, spruce, fir and poplar forests. The boreal forest also supports a rich cultural legacy. Over 80 percent of Canada's First Nations and aboriginal peoples' communities are in the boreal forest.

Kimberly-Clark buys virgin fiber from logging companies operating in the boreal forest in Ontario and Alberta. Not only is this logging done through massive clearcuts that harm the environment, Kimberly-Clark is part of a growing demand for pulp from Canada's boreal that is putting pressure on the parts of the boreal forest still not allocated for forestry. Kimberly-Clark has the opportunity to lessen this pressure by increasing the amount of post-consumer recycled content in all its products.

Disposable Products Should Not Mean 'Disposable' Forests

Kimberly-Clark claims to be an environmental leader, but its lack of commitment to post-consumer recycled content in its products and its lack of support for sustainable forestry are gaping holes in its environmental record. Kimberly-Clark persists in using virgin fiber for its tissue products when other companies have shown that commercially viable alternatives exist. For example, Cascades, based in Montreal, is the fourth largest tissue product manufacturer in North America. Cascades meets 96 percent of its pulp requirements with recycled fiber. It has recently committed to meet the remaining 4 percent with Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) eco-certified pulp by 2007. Seventh Generation, based in Vermont, sells its 100 percent recycled consumer tissue products throughout North America, as does Atlantic Packaging, based in Toronto.

Reaction of NRDC and Greenpeace Members

Last November, Greenpeace and the Natural Resources Defense Council launched a public education campaign to help large purchasers of tissue products, our members and others lessen their impact on Canada's boreal forest. Since the launch of the initiative, over 45,000 letters from consumers in Canada, the United States and from around the world have been sent to Kimberly-Clark asking for an increase in the post-consumer recycled content of its products and an end to the sourcing of pulp from endangered and ancient forests. Our members are horrified to think of ancient forests being turned into disposable tissue paper products that are used once and then thrown away or flushed down the toilet.

What Should Kimberly-Clark Do?

Maximize post-consumer recycled and agricultural residue fiber content: Stop producing tissue products that are manufactured solely out of virgin wood fibers. Maximize post-consumer recycled content and/or fiber from agricultural residues in all tissue products. Minimize fiber requirements by redesigning products and increasing production efficiency.

Stay out of endangered forests: Stop using wood fiber from endangered forests in such regions as the Canadian boreal. Stop buying pulp or wood fiber from operations that use environmentally unsustainable forestry practices, such as converting natural forests to plantations or clearcutting. Ensure that any virgin wood fiber used comes from sustainable logging operations that are eco-certified to Forest Stewardship Council standards. For more information on the Forest Stewardship Council please visit www.fsc.org.

* * *

Greenpeace is an independently funded organization that works to protect the environment. It challenges government and industry to halt harmful practices by negotiating solutions, conducting scientific research, introducing clean alternatives, carrying out peaceful acts of civil disobedience and educating and engaging the public. Greenpeace operates in over 40 countries around the world. More information is available at Greenpeace's Kleercut Web site, at www.kleercut.net.

The Natural Resources Defense Council is a national, nonprofit organization of scientists, lawyers and environmental specialists dedicated to protecting public health and the environment. Founded in 1970, NRDC has more than 1 million members and e-activists nationwide, served from offices in New York, Washington, Santa Monica and San Francisco. <http://www.nrdc.org/land/forests/tissue.asp>.