

# Flushing the Climate 2023: A Follow Up Scorecard on Which U.S. Stores are Still Selling the World's Most Destructive Toilet Paper

by Joshua Martin | Apr 19, 2023 | Indonesia, Reduce Greenhouse Gases, Responsible Virgin Fibre, Social Responsibility, Transparency and Integrity

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- Three major brands of toilet paper in the United States – Fiora, Livi, and LoCor – manufactured by Solaris Paper, are made from fiber supplied by Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) or affiliated companies.
- Fiora, Livi, and LoCor tissue brands are high-risk products linked to Asia Pulp and Paper's destruction of tropical forests, climate impacts, and social conflicts in Indonesia.
- EPN-North America contacted 23 major U.S. grocery stores and retailers selling Fiora, LoCor and Livi products and asked them to remove these products until reforms are implemented by APP.
- 10 years after APP announced its Forest Conservation Policy, conservation organizations have documented that APP has failed to fulfill its commitments but continues to aggrandize its policy —

prompting concerns of greenwashing.

Indonesia's pulp and paper fiber industry is one of the largest and most influential in the world. Its rainforests and peatlands have become a global hotspot for paper fiber sourcing — and an epicenter of environmental tragedy. Headquartered in Jakarta, Asia Pulp and Paper is the largest paper producer in Indonesia. APP's damaging legacy spans over 30 years — chronicling more than 5 million acres of deforestation; the destruction of millions of acres of endangered wildlife habitat, including the critically endangered Sumatran tiger; catastrophic fires and greenhouse gas emissions; violence; and hundreds of conflicts with local communities due to land grabbing and failures to respect the rights of Indigenous Peoples to refuse development on their lands.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) — widely considered the strongest certification for forests and forest products available — disassociated APP in 2007 due to the company's deforestation and human/traditional rights violations. APP remains disassociated from FSC. Ninety environmental and human rights groups have published an open letter to investors and buyers asking to suspend business with Asia Pulp and Paper until the company makes veritable changes across their business operations, and WWF has issued an Advisory to avoid doing business with Asia Pulp and Paper or any of its subsidiaries or affiliates.

Yet, thanks to greenwashing, seductively low prices, and a complicated web of affiliated companies and brands, APP products continue to be sold in the US market. Three major brands of tissue paper in the United States — Fiora, Livi, and LoCor — are manufactured by Solaris Paper, and are made with fiber supplied by Asia Pulp and Paper.

APP's toilet paper fiber is made from wood pulp sourced from carbon-rich peatlands that are drained and emit huge climate emissions and cause massive fires. Peatlands store huge amounts of carbon — twice as much as all the world's forests. The vast majority of Indonesia's emissions do not come from fossil fuels — they come from the clearing and burning of millions of hectares of forests and peatlands to develop monoculture plantations.

In 2013, APP introduced a Forest Conservation Policy (FCP) that committed to immediately and permanently end deforestation, stop expansion onto peatlands, and resolve social conflicts. A decade later, repeated documentation shows they have not. For example, between August 2018 and June 2020, APP cleared 3,500 hectares of Indonesian peatland — directly breaching their Forest Conservation Policy commitments on peatland degradation and reducing emissions. APP's failure to uphold its commitments, while continuing to aggrandize its zero deforestation policy, demonstrates that the company has greenwashed faster than they have implemented changes.



2023 Scorecard Grading Scale

## U.S. Retailers Market Research

In 2021–2022, EPN-North America and partners identified and wrote to 23 leading retailers in the U.S. addressing concern over Fiora, LoCor, and Livi brand tissue products and their supplier Asia Pulp & Paper (APP), and requested that companies discontinue the sale of these high-risk products in their stores in line with corporate social responsibility and environmental social governance (ESG).

EPN published that market research and a scorecard summarizing the responses of companies in the report *Flushing the Climate: Which U.S. Stores are Still Selling the World's Most Destructive Toilet Paper?* As follow up, EPN undertook a 6-month review in early 2023 to identify which companies continue to carry these high-risk products, and which have removed them and committed to responsible sourcing. The results of our renewed market research and outreach are summarized in the updated 2023 Scorecard below.



## 2023 U.S. GROCERY STORE SCORECARD

A GUIDE TO MAJOR U.S. RETAILERS CARRYING HIGH-RISK TISSUE PRODUCTS: FIORA; LOCOR; LIVI

COMPANY	NO RESPONSE NO ACTION	RESPONSE NO ACTION	REVIEWING REMOVAL	IN REMOVAL	REMOVED ALL PRODUCTS
Ahold Delhaize					✓
Office Depot/Office Max					✓
SpartanNash					✓
Amazon				✓	
Officesupply.com				✓	
Lowe's Home Improvement			✓		
Walmart			✓		
Aldi *		✗			
CVS		✗			
Kroger		✗			
Save Mart		✗			
Albertsons Companies <small>Safeway   et. al</small>	✗				
Bashas	✗				
Bodega Latina <small>Smart &amp; Final   El Super   Fiesta Mart</small>	✗				
Brookshire	✗				
Food City [K-VA-T]	✗				
Home Depot	✗				
IGA	✗				
KMart	✗				
Menards *	✗				
Piggly Wiggly *	✗				
Supervalu [UNFI]	✗				
WinCo Foods	✗				

\* New retailers added to the 2023 scorecard. Retailer was not included in original 2022 scorecard

\*\* OfficeSupply.com was acquired in 2019 and is now a wholly owned subsidiary of Office Depot

## Results

**Office Depot and Ahold Delhaize remain leaders** in reducing social and environmental risk in their product offerings. Office Depot took quick steps to halt online purchasing of products at a recently acquired subsidiary, and are working on a long-term solution to ensure they do not carry any product lines that come from Solaris/APP. Ahold Delhaize stressed that the company looks to be deforestation-free in more than just paper products, and that the company aims to go beyond deforestation-free products and source conversion-free products.

**SpartanNash was upgraded from red to green** after the company removed Fiora products from a subsidiary that had ordered inventory during the height of the COVID toilet paper/tissue shortage. When brought to their attention, the company removed the product from online retail and worked to

liquidate any inventory by the end of the month, stating that they take corporate social responsibility seriously and do not plan to carry Fiora products.

**Amazon was upgraded from red to light green** after the company removed all three brands from their online marketplace, and are working on removing remaining products under the Solaris brand name.

Of the five companies that were represented in yellow in 2022, **only Lowe's Home Improvement and Walmart maintain their status as "reviewing removal."** While Lowe's removed Livi and LoCor products from their supply chain, they continue to retail Fiora products. Walmart removed LoCor and Livi products from physical stores, but continues to retail these products online.

**CVS, Kroger, and Home Depot were downgraded** due to inaction and insufficient response to outreach. Despite earlier commitments to review these products, these companies have taken no steps to effectuate their removal or communicate the results of their review. These companies have had significant prior engagement with EPN and partners, are fully aware of the environmental destruction and social conflict associated with these brands, and have had months to consider action.

Contrary to ALDI's prior assurances that they do not retail these products (resulting in their exclusion from the 2022 scorecard), the updated market research in early 2023 found that the company does sell Fiora products. After multiple failed outreach attempts and evidence of blacklisting EPN communications, ALDI responded to EPN's outreach but gave no indication that they plan to take any action, or review the matter further.

Until it is verified APP has made meaningful changes across their business operations, continuing to do business with Asia Pulp and Paper or any of its affiliates is not in line with corporate social responsibility and sustainable sourcing of forest products, and companies that continue to do so may be in contravention of their expressed ESG commitments.

To safeguard our climate, the extraordinary biodiversity of Indonesia's rainforests, and the rights and livelihoods of local and indigenous communities, organizations including WWF and others have alerted the marketplace to avoid toilet paper products made by Asia Pulp and Paper and its affiliates. Instead, companies and customers should look for alternatives that are made from recycled materials or certified by credible organizations such as the Forest Stewardship Council.

We applaud the companies who have shown leadership and have chosen to remove these products. Supermarkets and retailers who have not taken action should promptly review the information provided and assess the risk of carrying these products and their impact on ESG concerns.