

December 10, 2015

Kristine Young

To: Kari Hamerschlag <khamerschlag@foe.org>

RE: Letter from 51 organizations asking for more sustainable practices at Darden Restaurants

Dear Ms. Hamerschlag,

“People, Planet & Plate” is how Darden describes our commitment to provide our guests with nutritious, high-quality and responsibly-sourced food, as well as operate responsibly by protecting the natural environment, supporting and developing our employees, and giving back to our communities.

Darden serves more than 320 million meals a year, and we know that our guests’ definition of quality is evolving and expanding. More and more, they want to know what’s in the food they are eating, where it came from, how it was produced, and how it meets their dietary needs. Similarly, Darden – and our guests – are increasingly aware that there are a host of sustainability issues ingrained in the foods we serve: from the water and energy used to grow and transport the ingredients, to the standards used in their production.

Accordingly, Darden takes animal welfare very seriously. We have a responsibility to ensure that animals are treated with respect and care in the process of providing nutritious food that is served in our restaurants. Our approach to animal welfare and auditing our suppliers is to ensure the ‘Five Freedoms’ of care throughout the life of farm animals. This guidance on humane animal treatment directs our practices as well as our selection of, and relationship with, sourcing partners.

A core part of citizenship at Darden is our commitment to reducing the environmental impact of our physical footprint – which includes our more than 1,500 restaurants, 10 distribution centers and our corporate headquarters. To help drive performance, in 2009 we established a set of targets to reduce per-restaurant energy and water use by 15% by 2015, and

work toward sending zero waste to landfill over time. In 2015, we have exceeded our goals by reducing restaurant energy use by 17%, and water use by 22.5% since FY2008. We have also made significant progress towards our aspirational goal of zero-waste by doubling our landfill diversion rate to 29%.

You can learn more about our comprehensive approach around People, Planet and Plate in our most recent [report](#) published in May 2015.

We know that sustainability is a journey and we will continue to share updates on our progress with all stakeholders through our website at www.darden.com/sustainability.

Sincerely,

Kristine Young

Sustainability Manager
Darden Restaurants, Inc.