# Unilever questioned over climate risk resilience amid whistleblower alarm



Unilever is set to face scrutiny today as part of a broader inquiry into the food industry’s preparedness for climate-related disruptions, prompted by a recent whistleblower memo that has raised serious concerns about the sector’s resilience to environmental risks. The questioning will take place at the Queen Elizabeth II Centre in Westminster and marks the beginning of a wider campaign by campaign group ShareAction, which plans to extend its inquiries to other major food companies, including Tesco, Sainsbury’s, Hilton Food Group, and Associated British Foods (ABF).

The memo, authored by several food industry executives and circulated last month, paints a stark picture of the sector’s vulnerability, warning that it is “sleepwalking” into a climate crisis without adequate safeguards. It described the industry as “woefully underprepared” for ecological challenges, with a reliance on “wishful thinking” and “false reassurances” directed at investors. According to the memo, companies have prioritised immediate economic concerns and regulatory compliance over longer-term threats such as extreme weather, global heating, and water shortages.

ShareAction, known for its previous campaigns urging food companies to address public health issues like obesity, is now broadening its focus to address food security in the context of environmental sustainability. Alexandra Pinzon, head of biodiversity at ShareAction, told The Grocer that the group has developed a series of questions for Unilever based on the memo’s assertions. Pinzon said, “We want to ask the company about its approach towards food resilience and supply chain management. We have deliberately chosen those companies that are very important for the UK ecosystem.”

ShareAction emphasised the significance of targeting large retailers, manufacturers, and processors who hold key positions in the corporate food ecosystem. They described Unilever as a natural starting point given its considerable influence within the sector. The campaign group's aims include prompting companies to better prepare for the looming threats highlighted in the memo, which details potential outcomes such as food shortages, sourcing collapses, and business failures.

The Grocer is reporting that the whistleblower memo has sparked a fresh wave of shareholder activism and public scrutiny on the often opaque risk management practices within the food industry. It highlights a pivotal moment in the sector, reflecting growing concern among investors and stakeholders over how food companies plan to navigate the increasing environmental challenges that threaten global food systems. This development signals a shift in the dialogue around climate risk, from general sustainability rhetoric to urgent questions about operational resilience and long-term strategic planning.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## References

* <https://www.unilever.co.uk/news/2023/our-call-for-climate-action-cop28-agenda/> - Unilever's commitment to achieving net-zero emissions across its value chain by 2039 and its call for urgent climate action at COP28.
* <https://www.kamcity.com/namnews/uk-and-ireland/manufacturers/unilever-seeking-shareholder-approval-for-climate-change-action-plan/> - Unilever's announcement to seek shareholder approval for its climate strategy, aiming to reduce emissions within its operations and supply chain.
* <https://www.sharesmagazine.co.uk/news/market/LSE20231212070127_5000067/unilever-green-claims-come-under-cma-microscope> - The Competition and Markets Authority's scrutiny of Unilever's environmental claims, highlighting concerns about potential greenwashing.
* <https://www.wbcsd.org/news/unilever-to-seek-shareholder-approval-for-climate-transition-action-plan/> - Details on Unilever's climate transition action plan, including science-based targets for emissions reduction and shareholder engagement.
* <https://www.foodprocessing-technology.com/news/unilever-seeks-shareholder-approval-for-climate-transition-action-plan/> - Unilever's initiative to obtain shareholder approval for its climate transition action plan, outlining strategies to address climate change.
* <https://www.sayonclimate.org/case-study-unilever/> - An overview of Unilever's climate transition action plan, its approval by shareholders, and the company's commitment to climate action.
* <https://news.google.com/rss/articles/CBMiyAFBVV95cUxNR0FCcGdubGxLTGNtZk9TbnZoTkNhbGRHTHg1V0NGWG5nNHdkQV9pb0JnMG9xOUV2Sm1ObHBhNXpCWms3a20tQ3VXMU4xbnVIMjc5M2lsbWNqalByU2JWczFTcm40M1NsVFhLRDd0TTNrSlZBNTZweHp6N21sT0VnbFZEVlUtWU9KSWs0ZVhJalFHWURwdXVmVkhqUnJoZGFqRVVnQnJGOXVkc2lLcFMwcko2Zno1VVRqT3ZKM0d1Q05LeDc0XzZfUQ?oc=5&hl=en-US&gl=US&ceid=US:en> - Please view link - unable to able to access data