



August 26, 2020

Dear Mr. Gorsky and Ms. Widmer,

Black Women for Wellness, our colleagues, allies and now over 200 organizations seeking the removal of toxic Johnson & Johnson products aggressively marketed to Black women are deeply disappointed by the patronizing and dismissive response from Ms. Widmer to [our July 8 request](#) that your company take its responsibility seriously to protect women around the world from unsafe chemical exposures.

Johnson & Johnson issued a statement [stating its solidarity](#) with the Movement for Black Lives/ Black Lives Matter. Just prior to that, Johnson & Johnson [announced it would](#) discontinue sales of its talc-based Baby Powder in North America but continue to sell it globally and allow retailers to sell down existing inventory.

Is Johnson & Johnson's statement of solidarity with Black lives simply a public relations stunt? Our request stands:

- a. Fully remove Johnson & Johnson talc-based baby powder from the entire global market – meaning both in North America *and* abroad;
- b. Safely dispose of your existing inventory of baby powder in North America: Don't simply shift your marketing and sales to low-income or marginalized communities domestically or abroad;
- c. Cease production of the product globally.

Your company states it is “committed to changing the trajectory of health for humanity” and that it is concerned about the safety of its products, including cosmetic talc, yet Johnson & Johnson plans to continue selling talc-based products abroad, even as past investigations (including a [2019 FDA investigation](#)) have uncovered trace amounts of asbestos in your talc, and women have [suffered from use of this product](#). Moreover, your [own internal Johnson & Johnson document](#) demonstrates that you expressly and grossly targeted Black and Brown women with your marketing, even as concerns increased about cancer risk linked to talc powder.

Asbestos contaminated talc should never be taken lightly. Yet your response ignores and dismisses thousands of ovarian cancer victims. Asbestos has been classified as a [known human carcinogen](#) by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the International Agency for Research on Cancer. According to the U.S. [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#), “There is no ‘safe’ level of asbestos exposure for any type of asbestos fiber.”



Johnson & Johnson has built and enjoys a positive reputation that is of immense value. Unfortunately many Black & Brown people are wary of medical and pharmaceutical companies due to historical patterns of exploitation and abuse. BWW is raising this concern with intention of supporting your brand and its reputation as you walk the talk giving attention to the safety, health and well being of Black women, women of color and workers globally. BWW is well aware that it is incumbent upon transnational corporations to lift values, ethics and practices across governments and borders that protect human lives.

In the absence of federal cosmetic safety regulation, you have an ethical responsibility to make decisions that will benefit people over profits. Your talc-based Baby Powder is [restricted in Europe](#), and you have agreed to discontinue selling it in North America, but we are concerned that your plan to continue to sell it globally will continue to expose women of color abroad to asbestos.

If you truly stand in solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement, we demand that you stop making this product, stop selling this product, and dispose of it properly. We have confidence your company can use its strategic talents and vast resources to produce safe products that do not harm women of color and are not sold at the expense of the safety of women's lives.

Black Women for Wellness, our partners and allies who now represent over 200 organizations from across the globe ask that you honor your stated morals and ethics and valuing the lives of women, Black women, women of color.

With great sincerity

Janette Robinson Flint  
Executive Director  
Black Women for Wellness  
[www.bwwla.org](http://www.bwwla.org)

CC: Jorge S. Mesquita, Executive Vice President, Worldwide Chairman-Consumer  
The Honorable Anna Eshoo, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Debbie Dingall, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Frank Pallone, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Ayanna Pressley, United States House of Representatives  
The Honorable Jan Schakowsky, United States House of Representatives

#### Supporting organizations

AActionsur l'Environnement et le Développement

Eugène Loubaki

Congo-  
Brazzaville



ABREA - Brazilian Association of Asbestos Victims	Eliezer Joao de Souza	Brazil
Academia Mexicana de Derecho Ambiental	Larisa de Orbe	México
Action for Breast Cancer Foundation	Sarah Cardona	Malta E U
Action on Smoking & Health Philippines	Rommel Arriola	Philippines
Advocates for Environmental and Social Justice	Sixto Carlos Jr.	Philippines
AEEFG Tunisia	Ibtissem Hajri	Tunisia
Alaska Community Action on Toxics	Pamela Miller	USA
Alaska PIRG	Veri di Suvero	USA
Algalita Marine Research & Education	Michael Doshi	USA
Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow	Elizabeth Saunders	USA
Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments	Katie Huffling	USA
Ambiente y desarrollo	Lorenzo Manuel Bozada Robles	Mexico
Annie Appleseed Project	Ann Fonfa	USA
APEDDUB	Najoua Bouraoui	Tunisia
APHA	Ann Loree	USA
Asbestos Disease Awareness Organization	Linda Reinstein	USA
Asian Ban Asbestos Network (A-BAN)	Sugio Furuya	Japan
Asian Citizen's Center for Environment and Health	Ye yong Choi	South Korea
Asociación Ecológica Santo Tomás A.C.	José Manuel Arias Rodríguez	México
Associação da Saúde Socioambiental (ASSA)	Rafaela Rodrigues da Silva	Brasil
Associação de Combate aos Poluentes (ACPO)	Jeffer Castelo Branco	Brasil
Associated Labor Unions	Alan Tanjusay	Philippines



Association Al Sahel pour le pêche maritime et le développement durable	Snaiba El abd	Morocco
Association Marocaine Santé, Environnement et Toxicovigilance (AMSETOX)	Rhalem Naima	Morocco
Association Minarets Ecologiques Pour Le Development Et Climat	Benramel Mostafa	Maroc
Associazione Italiana Esposti Amianto		Italy
Ban Asbestos Network	Fernanda Giannasi	Brazil
BAN Toxics	Reynaldo San Juan Jr.	Philippines
Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League	Louis Zeller	USA
Break Free From Plastic	Estelle Eonnet	France
Breast Cancer Action	Marj Plumb	USA
Breast Cancer Prevention Partners	Linda Helper-Corley	USA
Breast Cancer UK	Margaret Wexler	UK
California Brain Tumor Association	Ellen Marks	USA
California Healthy Nail Salon Collaborative	Swati Sharma	USA
California League of Conservation Voters	Melissa Romero	USA
Californians for a Healthy and Green Economy CHANGE	Paula Andrea Torrado Plazas	USA
Campaign for Safe Cosmetics	Janet Nudelman	USA
Carbone Guinée	Ibrahima Sory SYLLA	Conakry
Casa Cem- Vias Verdes A.C.	Sofia Carlota Chavez Arce	México
Center for Biological Diversity	Hannah Connor	USA
Center for Environmental Health	Andrea Braswell	USA
Center for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE)	Lienna Feleke-Eshete	USA
Center for Public Health and Environmental Development (CEPHED)	Ram Charitra Sah	Nepal



Centre for Ecological Governance and Gender (CEGGI)Initiatives	Robert Katemburura	Uganda
Chemical Safety Agency	Pavlovskiy Denys	Ukraine
Children's Environmental Health Foundation (CEHF)	Michael Musenga	Zambia
CILAS, AC	Francisco A. Mercado Calderón	MEXICO
Citizens Campaign for the Environment	Adrienne Esposito	USA
City of Minneapolis	Jacqueline Noble	USA
Clean and Healthy New York	Kathleen A. Curtis	USA
Clean Label Project	Jaclyn Bowen MPH	USA
Clean Water Action & Clean Water Fund	Andria Ventura	USA
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues	Sue Klein	USA
Colnodo	Placido Silva	Colombia
Coming Clean	Steve Taylor	USA
Consumer Federation of California	Robert Herrell	USA
Consumer Rights for Safe Food	Rene Pineda, Jr.	Philippines
Consumers' Association of Penang	Mohideen Abdul Kader	Malaysia
Consumers for Safe Cell Phones		USA
Corporate Ethics International	Michael Marx	USA
CounterCorp	John Wilner	USA
CREPD	Gilbert KUEPOUO	Cameroon
Data for Justice	Monica E. Unseld, Ph.D, MPH	USA
Don't Take That Receipt!	Alexandra M Pinschmidt	USA
Dr. Yolanda Whyte Pediatrics	Yolanda Whyte, MD	USA
Društvo ŠEV	Anamarija Slabe	Slovenia
Earthjustice	Eve Gartner	USA



Eco Sitio	Luis Tuninetti	Argentina
ECOCITY	Eri Bizani	Greece
Ecological Alert and Recovery - Thailand (EARTH)	Penchom Sae Tang	Thailand
Ecowaste Coalition	Aileen Lucero	Philippines
Elavo Mundi Solutions, LLC	Nicole Acevedo	USA
Emerging Workforce Initiative	Elizabeth Senn-Alvey	USA
Emory University	John Kaufman	USA
Empire State Consumer Project	Carol Chittenden	USA
Environics Trust	Mohit Gupta	India
Environment and Social Development Organization	Siddika Sultana	Bangladesh
Environment Friends Society	Khawla Al-Muhannadi	Bahrain
ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE INSTITUTE	Opondo Gerphas	Kenya
Environmental Defence Canada	Muhannad Malas	Canada
Environmental Health Strategy Center	Patrick MacRoy	USA
Environmental Working Group	Nneka Leiba	USA
FCTC Alliance Philippines (FCAP)	Divine Abordo	Philippines
Feminist Majority Foundation	Sue Klein	USA
Ferris State University	Joy Onyinye	USA
Forgiving For Living, Inc.	Wendy Gladney	USA
Friends of the Earth - U. S.	Lisa Archer	USA
Fronteras Comunes	Marisa	México
Fundacion ECOSUR	MARTA MAFFEI	Argentina
Fundación para la defensa del ambiente (FUNAM)	Raul A. Montenegro	Argentina
GAIA Asia Pacific	Froilan Grate	Philippines
Gallifrey Foundation	Antoinette Vermilye	Switzerland



Georgian Environmental and Biological Monitoring Association (GEBMA)	Manana Juruli	Georgia
GLOBAL 2000	Waltraud Novak	Austria
Global Initiative for Environment and Reconciliation (GER)	Aphrodice Nshimiyimana	Rwanda
Grassroots Environmental Education	Patricia Wood	USA
Green Convergence	Ma. Teresa M.Oliva	Philippines
Greenpeace USA	Charlie Cray	USA
Greenwomen Analytical Environmental Agency	Lydia Astanina	Қазақстан
Guide Foundation for Development (GFFD)	Murali Krishna MKS	India
Hadassah	Randi Cohen Coblenz	USA
Hands for Environment and Sustainable Development	Oruba AlRefai	Jordan
Health and Environment Justice Support International (HEJSupport)	Alexandra Caterbow	Germany
HealthLink	Lynn Nadeau	USA
HEJSupport	Olga Speranskaya, Alexandra Caterbow	Germany
Human Environmental Association for Development	Marie Therese Seif	Lebanon
Huntington Breast Cancer ACTION Coalition, Inc	Karen Miller	USA
IDEPSCA	Maegan E. Ortiz	USA
India Ban Asbestos Network	Pooja Gupta	India
Indonesia Ban Asbestos Network	M. Darisman	Indonesia
Institute of Social Research and Development	Mr. Ksh. Dinesh Singh	India
Integrated Research and Action for Development	Ananya Bhatia	India
Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (IDIS), Inc.	Chinkie Peliño Golle	Philippines
International Ban Asbestos Secretariat (IBAS)	Laurie Kazan-Allen	UK
International Pollutants Elimination Network	Dr. Tadesse Amera and Pamela Miller	Sweden



Iowa Breast Cancer Edu-action	Christine Carpenter	USA
IRTECO	Mwadhini Myanza	Tanzania
Jagrata Juba Shangha	ATM Zakir Hossain	Khulna
John Snow, Inc. (JSI)	Penelope Riseborough	USA
Jóvenes Ambientalistas	Raomir Manzanarez	Nicaragua
Justice Pesticides	Arnaud Apoteker	France
Kapatiran komunidad Peoples Coalition	Evelyn Silario Galang	Philippines
Kids In Danger	Nancy Cowles	USA
Krusada sa Kalikasan	Catalina Jocson	Philippines
Land and Human to Advocate Progress (LHAP)	Ziyad Alalawneh	Jordan
L'association pour la protection de l'environnement et du patrimoine	Moez Gharsalli	Tunisia
Marshall University	Sarah Surber	USA
Massey University Political Ecology Research Centre	Trisia Farrelly	New Zealand
Material Research L3C	James R Vallette	USA
McNary Group	Lacey McNary	USA
Media Done Responsibly	Shaunelle Curry	USA
Medicina Democratica		Italy
Mind the Store campaign	Mike Schade	USA
Moms for a Non-Toxic New York	Alexandra Zissu	USA
Mother Earth Foundation Philippines	Sonia S Mendoza	Philippines
Mujeres Ambientalistas de El Salvador	Cidia Cortes	El Salvador
Nagkakaisang Lakas ng mga Mangangalakal sa Longos (NLML)	Joana Amicaan	Philippines
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF)	Jaclyn Dean	USA
National Centre for Asbestos Related Diseases	Anna Nowak	Australia





National Toxic Encephalopathy Foundation	Angel De fazio, BSAT	USA
National Toxics Network	Jane Bremmer	Australia
National Women's Health Network	M. Isabelle Chaudry	USA
Naturepedic Organic Mattresses & Bedding	Barry A. Cik	USA
NavAnubhuti	Pradeep Dadlani	India
Nexus3 Foundation	Yuyun Ismawati	Indonesia
ONG LA GRANDE PUISSANCE DE DIEU	Joseph Denoubeto	Benin
Oregon Environmental Council	Jamie Pang South	USA
Paryavaranmitra	Mahesh	INDIA
PELUM Lesotho	Hilda Molemohi	Lesotho
Physicians for Social Responsibility - Los Angeles	Martha Dina Arguello	USA
Physicians for Social Responsibility, SF Bay Area	Robert M. Gould, MD	USA
Piglas Kababaihan Women Group	Mercedes Donor	Philippines
PODER (People Organizing to Demand Environmental & Economic Rights)	Antonio Díaz	USA
Rapal	Javier Souza Casadinho	Argentina
REMPA	Fabian Carvallo	Mexico
RESearch Center for RURal development	Le Thanh Phong	Vietnam
Research Centre for Gender, Family and Environment in Development (CHFED)	Hang Pham	Vietnam
Réseau Environnement Santé	Cicolella André	France
RightOnCanada.ca		Canada
Rio Grande International Study Center	Tricia Cortez	USA
Rural Communities Development Agency (RCDA)	Rostom Gamisonia	Georgia
Safer Chemicals Healthy Families	Liz Hitchcock	USA
Sagip Pasig Movement	Severino Galindo	Philippines



Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth)	Mageswari	Malaysia
	Sangaralingam	
Samahan ng mga Mangangalakal ng Scrap sa Capulong (SMNC)	Charina Davin	Philippines
Samahan ng mga Mangangalakal sa Bagong Silang (SMBS)	Benedicto Nario	Philippines
Samahan ng mga Mangangalakal sa San Vicente Ferrer Camarin Caloocan City (SMSVFCCC)	Eduardo Bernales	Philippines
Sarilaya, Inc.	Myrna H. Jimenez	Philippines
Sex and Gender Health Collaborative of the AMWA	Janice L Werbinski	USA
Sierra Club	Sonya Lunder	USA
Society for Sustainable Development	Arun Jindal	India
Story of Stuff Project	Elisa Ringholm	USA
Streetsmart	Kelly RODGERS	USA
Sustainable Environment Development Initiative	Tom Aneni	Nigeria
THANAL	Jayakumar C	India
The Positive Results Corporation	Kandee Rochelle Lewis	USA
Together to protect Human & the Environment Association	Saadiyah Hassoon	Iraq
Toxic Free NC	Alexis Luckey	USA
Toxics Link	Satish Sinha	India
Toxisphera Environmental Health Association	Zuleica Nycz	Brazil
Tufts University School of Medicine.	Beth Rosenberg	USA
Turtle Island Restoration Network	Joanie M Steinhaus	USA
U.S. PIRG	Danielle Melgar	USA
University of Massachusetts Lowell, Department of Public Health	Craig Slatin	USA



Urban & Environmental Policy Department; Occidental College	Bhavna Shamasunder	USA
Vermont Conservation Voters	Lauren Hierl	USA
Vietnam Zero Waste Alliance	Xuan Quach	Việt Nam
WEACT for Environmental Justice	Kerene Tayloe	USA
Wen (Women's Environmental Network)	Kate Metcalf	UK
Window to Environment	Hiam KREIDIE	LEBANON
Wisconsin Environmental Health Network	Ann Behrmann MD	USA
Women Engage for a Common Future - Netherlands	Sascha Gabizon	Netherlands
Women Engage for a Common Future - Georgia	Anna Samwel	Georgia
Women Engage for a Common Future - Germany	Hanna Mertes	Germany
Women's Voices for the Earth	Jamie McConnell	USA
Young Volunteers for the Environment	Joe Bongay	Gambia
ZERO - Association for the Sustainability of the Earth System	Susana Fonseca	Portugal
Zero Waste Washington	Heather Trim	USA