

Apple Shareholder Meeting Question
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My name is Horace Cooper, and I am representing the National Center for Public Policy Research – a free-market think-tank, and a company shareholder. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

Mr. Cook, Apple is a member of the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA) – one of the country’s largest Washington, DC-based trade associations. RILA has launched a massive market- and labor-distorting campaign dubbed “sustainability.” Under this so-called sustainability campaign, it is currently pressuring its members to make unaffordable capital expenditures that have limited prospects for a reasonable return. RILA also advocates that its members lobby for changes in local building codes or infrastructures that will increase the cost of buildings and result in significant restrictions on the use of property. Finally, RILA is advocating top-down “sustainability” standards that go beyond its own members, affecting the entire supply chain, despite the likelihood that these standards will increase suppliers’ costs and in turn the costs of the goods that they sell. In some cases those increased costs will have to be passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices. In other cases, American companies may be pushed out of the supply chain altogether. Neither is good for Apple or the consumer.

As of now, RILA’s sustainability goals are voluntary for its members. However, RILA is apparently moving towards making those sustainability standards mandatory. We have concerns that these standards may harm competition, creating a “new monopoly.”

We are also concerned that this will add an additional layer of regulation on the retail industry, an industry that already operates under heavy constraints from federal, state and local governments. The economy has been stagnant for nearly 5 years and in the last quarter the economy shrank. Measures that expand growth and sales are good for Apple and the nation. Those that don’t are not.

So Mr. Cook, could I get a commitment from you that Apple will oppose any move by RILA to make sustainability standards mandatory for its corporate members?

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