

OPEN LETTER TO BAYER SHAREHOLDERS

25 APRIL 2025

To: Shareholders of Bayer

Dear Sir or Madam:

In anticipation of Bayer's AGM, we, civil society organisations from both sides of the Atlantic ocean and beyond, are writing to you regarding the company's ongoing lobbying activities, in particular those deployed in the US at the expense of US citizens' rights. In our view, these activities do not live up to Bayer's own **Code of Conduct**¹, nor to general principles of corporate responsibility, such as the **International Code of Conduct on Pesticide Management**² and the **basic principles of the UN Global Compact**³.

In 2024, **Bayer CEO Bill Anderson** stated that in "building a company, (...) a shared sense of integrity and a strong ethical code are absolutely essential" and called upon "everyone in Team Bayer (...) to ensure we're acting with integrity". Mr Anderson also stated that "political advocacy, or lobbying, means participating in democratic processes and formation of public policy by communicating a person's or organisation's interests to politicians and institutions that create policies and regulatory frameworks affecting their areas of activity or business."

However, for at least the past two years and till today, the Europe-based multinational Bayer is waging an **intensive lobbying campaign** in the US which goes far beyond merely "communicating a person's or organisation's interests to politicians and institutions that create policies and regulatory frameworks". Over the past decade, 181,000 US plaintiffs have filed lawsuits against the company, arguing they were not informed of the dangers of using glyphosate-based Roundup herbicide. Many have won multi-million-dollar and even multi-billion-dollar jury verdicts, and tens of thousands have received settlements from Bayer. But many more trials continue.

Bayer is now responding by lobbying federal and state authorities to block citizens from taking producers to court when they suffer damage to their health after using their toxic products. As reported in **the Washington Post**, a draft of the US Farm Bill contained a section, "drafted with the aid of Bayer", that would prevent state and local authorities from setting their own standards on pesticide safety warnings.⁴ This cannot be regarded as "ethical and responsible" behaviour. Laws to this end have been introduced in at least eight US states⁵ and are being prepared in more than twenty states. According to Bayer's own figures, in 2023 the company **spent 18 million USD** on lobbying in the US.

1 As international research shows, the largest agrichemical companies in the world (BASF, Bayer Crop Science, Corteva Agriscience, FMC and Syngenta/Synchem) make more than one-third of their sales income from highly hazardous pesticides – the pesticides that are most harmful to human health and the environment. See: <https://www.publiceye.cWh/en/media-corner/press-releases/detail/pesticide-giants-make-billions-from-bee-harming-and-carcinogenic-chemicals>

2 The last version of the International Code of Conduct with emphasis on public health, "focuses on risk reduction by calling on countries to identify and, if necessary, remove from use, of highly hazardous pesticides" and calls on industry and governments to "take all necessary precautions to protect workers, bystanders, nearby communities and the environment." See: <https://openknowledge.fao.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/a9191456-07cb-4a79-9dce-50472e31b694/content>

3 See UN Global Compact principles 7 and 9: <https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-7>
<https://unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles/principle-9>

4 Washington Post, 20 June 2024. Bayer lobbies Congress to help fight lawsuits tying Roundup to cancer. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/2024/06/20/bayer-roundup-farm-bill-lobbying/>

5 The Guardian, 10 February 2025. Farmers 'very worried' as US pesticide firms push to bar cancer diagnoses lawsuits. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2025/feb/10/pesticide-lawsuits-cancer-gag-act>

Court documents show that Bayer and Monsanto have long and **aggressively fought the science**⁶ on glyphosate and glyphosate-based herbicides such as Roundup. In an **open letter of April last year**, Bayer called scientific studies brought forward in the litigations against Roundup “junk science”. This includes studies by scientists working independently of pesticide companies, which were reviewed by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) and **led it to classify glyphosate** as a probable human carcinogen.

As recently as December 2023, a **US National Institutes of Health study** reported fresh evidence that glyphosate exposure is associated with oxidative stress in humans, which is known to lead to many diseases, including cancer⁷. In response, an American coalition of farm workers, public health and environmental advocates **filed a legal petition** with the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) demanding they immediately suspend authorization for glyphosate.

In fact, in 2023 Bayer promised to remove glyphosate from Roundup products sold to US consumers – only to make things worse by adding four chemicals, two of them banned in the EU, including diquat dibromide. As reported by Friends of the Earth US, this makes **the new Roundup on average 45 times more toxic** to human health following long-term, chronic exposures.

Around the world, with its deep pockets, Bayer tries to undermine laws and regulations that should protect the population and the environment and hence serve the general interest, deploying a wide range of lobbying tactics⁸. In Europe, for example, Bayer – along with its lobby group Croplife EU – fought hard to **take down** the pesticide reduction law, a crucial part of the EU Green Deal.

This is in stark contrast also with what European lawmakers outlined in their **Report on the Monsanto Papers**. The authors – Members of the European Parliament – stated that we need stronger risk management measures: “The authorisation procedure for plant protection products should remain science-based and rely on independent, transparent and efficient processes” and “studies used for the assessment should be more independent and based on scientific evidence, to avoid conflicts of interests”.

Bayer’s lobby campaign in the US has now ignited battles in several US farming states between farm groups. In **the New Lede** and **The Guardian**, Aaron Lehman, an Iowa corn and soybean farmer, president of the **Iowa Farmers Union**, said: “We’re very worried. Our farmers feel that if they have injuries or illnesses due to their use of a pesticide they should have access to the courts. We just don’t think the playing field should be tilted.”

Bayer claims that the legislative changes are simply necessary to protect its “important investments” and to ensure farmers don’t lose access to Roundup. This is in stark contradiction of its self-declared value of “integrity” and internationally accepted standards.

The aim of Bayer’s lobby campaign is simple: to maximise profits and maintain an almost monopolistic control over the commercial seed and pesticides markets.⁹ As the US academic **Phil Howard wrote**,

6 These include manipulating science, including ghostwriting, funding disinformation campaigns, influencing regulators, and organising a smear campaign against IARC. See: <https://stopglyphosate.eu/policy-and-scientific-integrity/>; <https://www.wisnerbaum.com/documents/monsanto-documents-chart-101217.pdf>

7 Glyphosate Use and Mosaic Loss of Chromosome Y among Male Farmers in the Agricultural Health Study: <https://ehp.niehs.nih.gov/doi/10.1289/EHP12834> and: <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/36629488/>

8 Bayer and Monsanto have been using trade policy to push third countries into changing their laws, while delaying and distracting policy makers with investment promises. These tactics have been deployed across the world: in the EU and the US, but also in Thailand, Mexico, and in African countries. See: <https://www.corporateeurope.org/en/2024/09/bayers-toxic-trails>

9 Just four multinationals – Bayer, BASF, Corteva and Syngenta – control over 65% of global trade in pesticides and at least half of the world’s seed trade, representing a multi-billion euro market. See: <https://philhoward.net/2020/11/19/concentration-and-its-impacts/>

Bayer's commercial strategies are hurting farmers in the US as well: "Agrifood consolidation reduces farmer autonomy and redistributes costs and benefits across the food chain, squeezing farmer incomes".

Simply put: Bayer's miscalculation of its 53 billion euro purchase of Monsanto in 2018 is coming at the expense of consumers, farmers and democracy, with commercial interests blatantly overruling **public health** and **environmental concerns**.

In view of the above, we, the undersigned organisations from the US, Europe, and beyond, urge you to make the following demands to Bayer:

- **Cease promoting the pesticide makers' legal immunity bills in the US**
- **Refrain from any further lobbying efforts that are damaging to the public interest**
- **Stop undermining scientific integrity by attacking independent science and instead, respect the Precautionary Principle.**

SIGNING ORGANISATIONS

EUROPE

Adéquations (France)
Arbeitsgemeinschaft bäuerliche Landwirtschaft (AbL) e.V., Germany
Association of Ethical Shareholders Germany (Germany)
Baby Milk Action (UK)
Bündnis für eine enkeltaugliche Landwirtschaft (BEL) e.V. (Germany)
Center for Research and Documentation Chile-Latin America (FDCL, Germany)
CCFD-Terre Solidaire (France)
Center for Sustainable Rural Development Kranj (Slovenia)
Comité de recherche et d'information indépendantes sur le génie génétique (CRIIGEN)
Coordination gegen BAYER-Gefahren (Germany)
Corporate Europe Observatory
Demeter Foundation (The Netherlands)
Earth Trek (Croatia)
Earth Thrive (UK/Balkans)
Ecobaby Foundation (the Netherlands)
Eco Hvar (Croatia)
Ecologistas en Acción (Spain)
Ecology without Borders Foundation
Ecocity (Greece)
European Coordination Via Campesina (Europe)
European Network for Environmental Medicine
Foodwatch International
Foodwatch Netherlands
Forum für Internationale Agrarpolitik e.v., Agrar Koordination (Germany)
Friends of the Earth Europe
Friends of the Irish Environment (Ireland)
Friends of the Earth England, Wales and Northern Ireland
Gallifrey Foundation (Switzerland)
Générations Futures (France)
Gen-ethisches Netzwerk e.V. (Germany)

GLOBAL 2000 - Friends of the Earth (Austria)
GMWatch (UK)
Interessengemeinschaft gegen Nachbaugebühren (IG-Nachbau, Germany)
International Society of Doctors for Environment (Isde, Italy)
Mouvement Ecologique (Luxembourg)
Nature & Progrès (Belgium)
Neo-Agri France (France)
Neo-Agri España (Spain)
People's Coalition on Food Sovereignty Europe
Pesticide Action Network Europe
Pesticide Action Network Netherlands
Pesticide Action Network UK
Pestizid Aktions-Netzwerk e.V. (PAN Germany)
PublicEye (Switzerland)
Scientists for Global Responsibility (UK)
TROCA - Plataforma por um Comércio Internacional Justo (Portugal)
Via Pontica Foundation (Bulgaria)
The Organic Centre (Ireland)
UK Hazards Campaign / Greater Manchester Hazards Centre (UK)
ZERO - Associação Sistema Terrestre Sustentável (Portugal)

US/NORTH AMERICA

Alianza Nacional de Campesinas Inc.
Beyond Pesticides
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Food Safety
Climate Land Leaders
Community Alliance for Global Justice/AGRA Watch
Environmental Working Group
Family Farm Defenders
Farm and Ranch Freedom Alliance
GMO/Toxin Free USA
GMOScience USA
Green America
Idaho Conservation League
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy (IATP)
Iowa Alliance for Responsible Agriculture (IARA)
Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement
Jefferson County Farmers & Neighbors, Inc. (JFAN)
Moms Across America
Moms for a Nontoxic New York (MNNY)
Moniteau County Neighbors Alliance
Northeast Organic Farming Association-Interstate Council
Northeast Organic Farming Association of New Hampshire
Organic Consumers Association
Pesticide Action & Agroecology Network North America (PANNA)
Poweshiek Community Action to Restore Environmental Stewardship (CARES)
Rachel Carson Council
Rural Education Action Project (DBA Rural Vermont)
Toxic Free North Carolina
Vigilance OGM (Québec, Canada)

INTERNATIONAL

Aalem for Orphan and Vulnerable Children (AOVC, Liberia)
AGENDA for Environment and Responsible Development (Tanzania)
Alianza por una Mejor Calidad de Vida de Chile (Chile)
Alliance for Action on Pesticides (AAPN, Nigeria)
Association APEDDUB (Tunisia)
Association For Promotion Sustainable Development (India)
Bangsa Moro autonomous region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM, Philippines)
Biofuelwatch (Europe/USA)
CASA CEM- Vias Verdes A.C (México)
Centro de estudios Heñóí, (Paraguay)
Child Rights International Network (CRIN)
Children's Environmental Health Foundation (Zambia)
Community Action Against Plastic Waste (CAPws)
Consumers' Association of Penang, (Malaysia)
DADO - Pakistan Human Development and Child Right Organization (Pakistan)
Ekō (USA/Europe)
Fundacion Aguaclara (Venezuela)
GeneEthics (Australia)
Greener world Alliance (Zambia)
Groundswell International
Haki Nawiri Afrika (Kenya)
Hamraah Foundation (India)
Health and Environment Justice Support
International Council of Women (ICW-CIF)
IFOAM Seeds Platform
Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ, Indonesia)
International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)
ISDE (Bangladesh)
Indonesia for Global Justice (IGJ, Indonesia)
Khanyisa Education and Development Trust (South Africa)
La Grande Puissance de Dieu (Benin)
Muchi children's Home (Zambia)
Navdanya International
PELUM (Zambia)
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) International
Pesticide Action Network (PAN) Africa (Senegal)
RAPAL (Uruguay)
Red de Acción en Plaguicidas y sus Alternativas de América Latina (RAP-AL)
Rural Women's Association for Agroecology (RWAA)
Rural Women's Assembly (Southern Africa)
Sahabat Alam Malaysia (Friends of the Earth, Malaysia)
Somali Greenpeace Association (SOGPA, Somalia)
The Caribbean Poison Information Network
Timuay Justice and Governance (TJG, Philippines)
UnPoison (South Africa)
Women on Farms Project (South Africa)