

Dear Sir/Madam,

We are contacting you on an urgent matter concerning the Baltic Sea. As you know, the Baltic Sea is one of the world's most unique ecosystems and the source of income and recreation for millions of people around its shores. Over the past 100 years however, the Baltic Sea has changed from a clear-water ecosystem to a eutrophic – nutrient rich – marine environment. The main reason for this is the release of large amounts of nutrients, mainly nitrogen and phosphorus, into its waters.

Eutrophication is a condition in an aquatic ecosystem where high nutrient concentrations stimulate the growth of algae, which leads to imbalanced functioning of the system, such as:

- intense algal blooms, including some species that produce toxins harmful to animals and humans;
- production of excess organic matter causing decreased visibility;
- subsequent oxygen depletion with resulting dead sea bottoms; and
- death of living organisms, including fish.

Although phosphorus from the use of detergents is not the largest contributor to the problem, studies by HELCOM and others show that the removal of phosphates from laundry and dishwasher detergents would be a significant contribution towards the solution and also, in the short term, the most cost-effective measure that can be taken to reduce the nutrient load on the Baltic Sea.

HELCOM recommendation 28E/7 recommends that phosphates in detergents are substituted with less harmful alternatives. As you are certainly aware, many countries inside and outside the EU have already imposed legal and/or voluntary bans on phosphates in detergents.

WWF and its partner organizations have recently conducted a brief analysis of detergents available in the consumer markets in five countries around the Baltic Sea. We have found that in all countries, there are phosphate-free products, both for laundry and for dishwashers, available to consumers.

However, we also found that [company name] has the following products, containing phosphates, for sale in [country name]:

- [List products here]
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We know you care as much about the Baltic Sea as we do. We therefore suggest that you as soon as possible initiate a process to replace the phosphates in your products with any of the several alternatives that are available today. We understand that the process of replacement will take some time, but of course, the quicker the better for the Baltic Sea.

We have enclosed a statement of commitment that we urge you to sign. We will keep the media informed of developments and we look forward to hearing back from you before 12 May and to further cooperate with you in this matter.

Sincerely,