

OIA | SUSTAINABILITY WORKING GROUP

Higg Index Commitment Statement - December 2016

The future we imagine is one in which the outdoor industry thrives within ecological limits and contributes to healthy communities globally. With the Higg Index, our industry now has a common tool to measure and communicate practices and performance, and an opportunity to realize our potential to be more responsible, more innovative, and to show true leadership.

In the past, differing approaches to environmental and social assessment have led to unnecessary waste and cost, as valuable resources were shifted from driving improvements to managing the high volume of reporting demands and audits. The Higg Index suite of tools will ultimately provide a common, consistent language for measuring impacts, driving improvement, and communicating within our supply chains, and in the future, with our customers. Scaling the Higg Index throughout the outdoor industry will enable us to achieve the level of environmental and social responsibility we would like to see throughout our business operations and shared supply chains.

The Higg Index has been developed over time and will be further refined through a multi-stakeholder collaborative process that began nearly 10 years ago with the original “Eco Index” work of the Outdoor Industry Association Sustainability Working Group. We recognize the time, energy, and passion that the outdoor industry has invested into the development of the Higg Index, and we acknowledge the stake the outdoor industry has in this tool’s adoption and success.

We, the signatories of this statement, fully support the Higg Index adoption effort within the outdoor industry. We acknowledge that the Higg Index is the emerging industry standard as envisioned, and by signing onto this statement, we publicly declare our commitment to use and work to improve the Higg Index, with the intention that it become the primary means to measure and communicate general product and supply chain environmental and social performance. We will collaborate to ensure that the voice of the outdoor industry continues to be heard in future development of the Higg Index suite of tools.

Many brands and manufacturers rely on a variety of tools to measure and improve environmental and social performance. The Higg Index provides a complementary framework for these tools. In some cases, establishing credit within the Higg Index for the practices measured by “equivalent” standards will further reduce the time and costs of assessment.

The ability of organizations to fully adopt the Higg Index will require us to develop tools that ultimately meet the needs of many individual companies. “Primary” status will evolve over time, a process which will include work to harmonize existing tools and standards, implement a verification protocol, and develop product-level assessment tools, led by members of the Sustainability Apparel Coalition (SAC), Outdoor Industry Association (OIA), and many global partners. All companies are strongly encouraged to engage in the development of the Higg Index to ensure future iterations are as relevant and useful as possible to each individual organization.

Sustaining the outdoor spaces and communities in which we work and play is one of the greatest challenges – and opportunities – of our time. No single company can accomplish this alone. We urge the outdoor industry to use its collective power to achieve the level of change first envisioned nearly 10 years ago: to align our businesses and supply chains around a common tool, and to fulfill the expectations held by us and our consumers, that we pioneer new and innovative ways of doing things – not just in how our apparel, footwear and gear functions during use, but also in the manufacturing process.

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We urge other outdoor industry companies to join us in signing this commitment.

Higg Index Commitment Statement Signatories – as of December 28, 2016

- Allied Feather & Down
- Berghaus
- Brooks Sports
- Burlington Industries, LLC
- Burton Snowboards
- Cascade Designs
- Columbia Sportswear
- Cone Denim, LLC
- Eagle Creek
- Farm to Feet
- Fenix Outdoor International
- Fjallraven
- Indigenous Designs
- JanSport
- Kathmandu
- KEEN
- La Sportiva
- MEC
- Mountain Hardware
- Mountain Khakis
- MSR
- Nemo Equipment
- Nester Hosiery
- ORVIS
- Packtowl
- Pearl Izumi
- Platypus
- PLUSfoam
- Point6
- prAna
- REI
- Safety Components Fabric Technologies, Inc.
- Salomon
- SealLine
- Smartwool
- Sustainable Down Source (a division of Down Decor)
- The North Face
- Therm-a-Rest
- Threads 4 Thought

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- Timberland
- Toad & Co.
- W.L. Gore
- Yakima

For more information or to sign on, please contact bjensen@outdoorindustry.org.