

Policy on Product Boycotts at the George Street Co-op

March 11, 2024

This policy has been created to address the issue of product boycotts by the George Street Co-op. Boycotts are an important tool to demonstrate our commitment to our values through adjustments to products offered (or not offered) in our retail space, as well as to send a message to outside organizations that their behavior is incompatible with Co-op values. In the event it is discovered that a product manufacturer, supplier, wholesaler, or other associated organization to the George Street Co-op (henceforth referred to as "Co-op Partners"), has engaged in practices that contradict the principles and values of the George Street Co-op, it may be necessary for the store to engage in a boycott of certain goods in the store's offerings. This task would be most appropriately handled by the General Manager, who is charged with day-to-day operations of the Co-op's store, and the Product Committee, which is described in the Co-op bylaws as having the following responsibilities:

- (a) To facilitate processes by which the values regarding products in the Bylaws are reflected in the products in the store.
- (b) To create policy and guidelines for products carried in the store.
- (c) To create processes and discussions which solicit feedback from members and shoppers about products sold at the Co-op.
- (d) To act as a mechanism by which feedback about products in the store from members and shoppers is communicated to the store management, staff, and the Board.
- (e) To educate members, shoppers, and the Board about issues related to products, including those sold at the Co-op.

- The issues which could trigger a boycott would include (but are not limited to):
- Unfair or abusive labor practices

- Human rights violations
- Bigoted behavior (Specifically those targeting race, gender, ethnicity, creed, nationality, religion, sexual orientation, gender expression, housing status, disability or physical/mental condition, and other related characteristics)
- Political/policy actions in opposition to the Co-op's values of unity, cooperation, and acceptance
- Excessive animal testing or cruelty
- Environmentally unfriendly business practices
- Any similar/related ethical violation or action brought to the attention of the store management, Board of Directors, or Product Committee Chair

If such an event or action were to occur with regards to a product stocked at the George Street Co-op, the process to implement a product boycott would be as follows:

1. Report of the issue to the General Manager, Board of Directors, and/or Product Committee Chair.
2. Product Committee Chair researches the allegations against the Co-op Partner, consulting with the Co-op Bylaws, Articles of Incorporation, and store management where necessary to discern whether the allegations are credible and contrary to Co-op values. Communications may also be made with other Co-ops, either in the region or nationally, to gain their insights. At this point, communications will additionally begin with the offending Co-op Partner (as

appropriate) to alert them of the allegations levied against them, to ensure they have an opportunity to offer their account of events, or to refute the claims that were made.

3. If allegations are found to be not credible and/or not in opposition to existing Co-op policies, the matter is deemed finished, and a boycott is not implemented.

If allegations are found to be credible and contrary to established Co-op values, the matter is to be referred to the Product Committee for discussion, where the Chair of the committee would present the findings to members. After discussion, members would formally present a decision to the General Manager to implement or not implement a product boycott, which would then be put into action by the General Manager . The decision would be summarized in a format that can be kept for the General Manager and the Co-op's records, and if a boycott is recommended, a letter is to be drafted and sent to the offending Co-op Partner to make them aware of our opposition.

4. If a boycott is decided on by the Product Committee membership and implemented by the General Manager, then the remaining stock of said products will be heavily priced down, or priced out and donated at the discretion of the manager. Future ordering of that product, as well as directly associated products, will be halted. Efforts will be made to find appropriate substitute products if possible. The General Manager is to report the implementations, and potential terminations, of any boycott to the Board of Directors at the next scheduled Board Meeting after implementation or reversal. The boycott shall also be

publicized by the General Manager using online and/or in-store postings.

If a boycott is not decided on by the Product Committee membership, then the matter is deemed finished, and a boycott is not implemented.

5. Boycotts will be reviewed twice per year by the General Manager and Product Committee to seek credibly reported information regarding corrective action by the offending Co-op Partner.

In Summary, the following responsibilities would be assigned to the following roles (listed in the order they would chronologically occur):

General Manager: Receive reports of problematic behaviors from Co-op Partners, Refer to Product Committee Chair, Assist in research if necessary, Implement boycott if recommended by Product Committee, Publicize the implementation of a boycott through social media or in-store signage, Periodically review boycotts for new information that may change the boycott status, along with Chair.

Board of Directors: Receive reports of problematic behaviors from Co-op Partners, Refer these allegations to the General Manager and Product Committee Chair, Hear results of boycott process at Board Meetings.

Product Committee Chair: Receive reports of problematic behaviors from Co-op Partners, Research allegations, Present researched findings to Product Committee Members, Write summary for General Manager and offending Co-op Partner, Periodically review boycotts for new information that may change the boycott status.

Product Committee Membership: Listen to, discuss, and vote on allegations of problematic behavior presented by Product Committee Chair, Recommend a course of action to the General Manager.

General Notes

- While it may be difficult to eliminate certain beloved brands from our product offerings, it may be deemed necessary to genuinely uphold the values and principles that embody the George Street Co-op as both an organization and collection of diverse individuals, even if our small size limits our influence on the overall industry practices.
- Exceptions to this policy could be made to accommodate special orders, as to not deprive someone of a food that may be physically, or otherwise, necessary.