

New Report Focuses on How Viscose Production Is Polluting Freshwater Resources

As our global population continues to grow and our natural resources become increasingly tighter, global entities that are concerned with how our resources are squandered, misused, or even misinterpreted have been created to make our global citizenry aware. One such organization is the [Changing Markets Foundation](#), which was established “to accelerate and scale up solutions to sustainability challenges by leveraging the power of markets.” How does such an organization affect consumer preference? They do so by “creating and supporting campaigns that shift market share away from unsustainable products and companies.”

While acknowledging that closed loop viscose production has made great strides to reduce pollution and become more sustainable, many viscose producers have misled the companies that consume their products—and, ultimately, consumers—as to their product sustainability. The Changing Markets Foundation has identified a number of viscose manufacturers in Asia that are polluting rivers even today, going as far to call out these manufacturers and the retailers that buy from them in a report entitled [“Dirty Fashion: How pollution in the global textiles supply chain is making viscose toxic.”](#)

An article written by Arthur Friedman titled [“H&M, Zara, Levi’s Slammed for “Dirty” Viscose Production”](#) on June 16, 2017, references this report, and it’s very apparent that global leading viscose producers still have third world practices. For example, wastewater containing toxic chemicals is being released into the local waterways, which threatens

marine life as well as the health of the local population.

Here is an excerpt from [Friedman's article](#):

Natasha Hurley, campaign manager at Changing Markets, said, "This report reveals that some of the world's biggest brands are turning a blind eye to questionable practices within their supply chains. With water pollution increasingly being recognized as a major business risk, shifting to more sustainable production processes should be high on retailers' agendas. Changing Markets is calling on retailers and brands to implement a strict zero pollution policy, with regular auditing of suppliers to ensure they comply with high production standards."

In addition to on-the-ground investigations, the report draws on the results of a questionnaire that was jointly issued to clothing brands by Changing Markets and Ethical Consumer in April.

In some areas visited for the investigation, pollution from viscose manufacturing is suspected to be behind the growing incidence of cancer, and villagers have stopped drinking the well water for fear of the effect it will have on their family's—particularly their children's—health, the report said.

At factories in West Java operated by Indian conglomerate Aditya Birla and Austria's Lenzing Group, Changing Markets found villagers washing viscose products in the Citarum river, directly exposing themselves to toxic chemicals and adding to the river's already considerable pollution load, the report alleged.

To read the responses of some of the "accused" companies, and to learn more about the changes that the Changing Markets Foundation calls for when it comes to "dirty fashion," read [the full article](#). You can also learn more about the foundation's campaign by [reading the full report here](#).

This reinforces how important it is that we all understand the implications of misuse of our shared global resources, and to protect them for future generations—all while protecting the safety and health of our current global citizens, too. Companies are responsible for their products, as well as their supply chains, and luckily for their partners and consumers organizations like the Changing Markets Foundation are keeping a close watch on their actions.