

A Conversation with Raymond J. Burnell, Director, Catholic Responsible Investments



CBIS

Raymond J. Burnell
*Director, Catholic
Responsible Investments*

CBIS' Impact Report noted you're engaging Domino's Pizza on water risk issues as part of the Valuing Water Finance Initiative (The Initiative). We understand the Impact & Justice (I&J) team is busy engaging with another food and beverage company.

Mr. Burnell: That's correct. We've had an opening dialogue with Molson Coors Beverage Company (TAP). The Initiative appreciates the good work we're doing with Domino's Pizza and asked us to co-lead the engagement with another investor.

Refresh us on the Valuing Water Finance Initiative.

Mr. Burnell: The Initiative is a global, investor-led effort to engage 72 companies with high water footprints. CBIS is a founding signatory of that effort, which now includes 90 investors representing \$17 trillion in assets.

The Initiative intends to get companies to act on water as a financial risk, then drive the necessary change to protect the water systems. All of these companies have the potential to better steward and protect freshwater resources.

Why Molson Coors?

Mr. Burnell: Besides its high-water-usage footprint, Molson Coors is a big business – the fifth-largest beer company in the world with more than 16,000 employees globally. It's a large and influential company that can both push forward and pull up other beverage companies.



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Do you expect this engagement to develop similarly to Domino's?

Mr. Burnell: Our approach is similar but with a different focus. Since beer is essentially 90% water, our goal will be to get the company to measurably enhance the water quality in its direct operations. Like Domino's, the first step for Molson Coors will be to assess its water risk exposure and disclose plans to mitigate those risks. Those results will inform the setting of targets and strategies to achieve those targets.

What key learnings from Domino's Pizza might help you with Molson Coors?

Mr. Burnell: To be well-prepared for our corporate dialogues and express clear motives, including that our role is to help identify and mitigate the kind of risk that could negatively impact shareholder value and ensure the promotion of the values of Catholic teaching.

Has the Church spoken specifically to the protection of water systems?

Mr. Burnell: Absolutely. There's a consistent clarion call in Catholic teaching to steward water as a source of all life and value it as an inalienable human right. The private sector's role is important in making sure that fresh water is available.

Is it too soon to have a sense of Molson Coors' current state of water stewardship?

Mr. Burnell: We believe the company is farther along in its water journey than many of its peers. But it's lagging big-name companies like Coca-Cola and Anheuser-Busch.

According to the World Economic Forum, if current levels of water usage aren't reduced, almost half the world's population will suffer severe water stress by 2030. Is it possible to make the kind of impact necessary in seven years?

Mr. Burnell: Water will remain a serious problem beyond the next seven years. What we can do is help lessen the severity of the crisis. This will involve articulating this moral imperative as part of a compelling business case for companies to improve their water stewardship.

In the Impact Report you shared a fascinating statistic: It takes nearly 42 gallons of water to make a single slice of Domino's pizza. Do you have a similar factoid for Molson Coors?

Mr. Burnell: I do. According to its last imprint report, Molson Coors' annual usage from all sources was 30 million cubic meters of water. Put in perspective, that's enough to cover nearly 25,000 U.S. football fields in a foot of water.



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