

The Green Guardians

<u>Team Member Names:</u>	<u>Year Of Graduation:</u>	<u>Major:</u>
Rater Tomlinson	2027	Economics, Marketing & Sales
Ethan Graham	2026	Journalism
Hannah Ludlage	2027	Management & Marketing
Thaddeus Blackburn	2026	Sales & Leadership

Advisors: Chris Haller MBA and Sarah Drewry MBA

TopicTitle: Harmful PFA's in Gore-Tex

Audience: W.L. Gore & Associates Board of Directors

Sustainable Development Goal

SDG #12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Executive Summary

GORE-TEX, produced by W. L. Gore & Associates has become one of the most widely used waterproof technologies by major brands in the outdoor apparel industry. However, concerns have emerged over the use of PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances), often referred to as “forever chemicals,” which can persist in the environment and pose potential health and ecological risks. Studies have found that these chemicals harm the environment, and that over 150 million Americans may be exposed to it through drinking water. Greater transparency about their use and impact is necessary.

The legal issues surrounding GORE-TEX stem from the fact that the mentioned chemical has been linked to contamination, affecting public health and the environment, requiring full transparency and strict legal compliance. If W. L. Gore faces lawsuits or regulatory scrutiny over PFAS releases, the consequences extend beyond fines and cleanup costs and could include court-ordered monitoring and environmental remediation. Continued reliance on PFAS also creates increasing financial risk for the company through potential lawsuits, regulatory penalties, environmental cleanup costs, and the possible loss of partnerships with outdoor brands that are prioritizing more sustainable suppliers. From a financial standpoint, we recommend investing in PFAS-free alternatives internally while increasing transparency and externally rebranding around more sustainable production practices. While this transition requires upfront investment, it ultimately protects long-term profitability. W.L. Gore has previously faced criticism for its use of PFAS, including organizations such as Greenpeace, raising ethical concerns about prioritizing profit over environmental responsibility. As a company with significant influence in the outdoor apparel industry, it has a responsibility to minimize its environmental impact and be transparent about the effects of its products. We propose accelerating the transition to PFAS-free alternatives while increasing transparency about how PFAS affect the environment.