

June 26, 2016

Pete Kappelman  
Chairman of the Board of Directors  
Land O'Lakes, Inc.  
4001 Lexington Ave N  
Arden Hills, Minnesota 55126

Dear Chairman Kappelman,

You may be aware of the [report](#)<sup>1</sup> published by the U.S. Government Accountability Office (“GOA”) in December 2015 addressing the representation of women on corporate boards for companies. While strides have been made to increase the number of board seats held by women, the gender gap remains wide and at the current rate, as many as forty years away from achieving an even balance among male and females. Land O'Lakes, Inc. has the potential to establish itself as a leader among other large cooperatives in closing this gap, especially given the large nature of your Board with 27 members.

Women make up [over half](#)<sup>2</sup> of the professional workforce, yet many difficulties prevent them from serving on boards. The study indicates the greatest hurdle being the lack of willingness and prioritization from leadership in recruiting diverse candidates. This concern is very real and a growing number of resources have recently become available to alleviate extra burdens on companies searching for qualified candidates — but, only effective if the companies show interest and consideration for female recruits.

Utilizing the resources available to appoint women to Land O'Lakes Board of Directors will likely benefit Land O'Lakes in its long-term development and progress. The top two industries with the largest percentage of women on boards include household and personal products, and food, beverage, and tobacco, 26.4% and 21.4% respectively. These industries represent 100% of Land O'Lakes' products. Adding at least one woman to the 27 member board will increase the company's ability to maintain its competitive edge within these industries, as well as better target the largest body of American consumers—women.

Studies have also shown that gender diversity on boards improves the financial value of the company (See [MSCI Research report](#)<sup>3</sup> and [Ernst & Young Insights](#)<sup>4</sup>). The statistics

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Government Accountability Office, Corporate Boards: Strategies to Address Representation of Women Include Federal Disclosure Requirements, *available at* <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-16-30>.

<sup>2</sup> Center for American Progress, The Women's Leadership Gap, *available at* <https://cdn.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/WomenLeadership.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> MSCI Research Insights, Women on Boards: Global Trends in Gender Diversity on Corporate Boards, *available at* <https://www.msci.com/documents/10199/04b6f646-d638-4878-9c61-4eb91748a82b>.

blatantly show a correlation between women serving on boards and improved financial performance. None of these potential beneficial financial returns will be possible unless you and the Board of Directors take the first step towards advancing the current makeup of the Board beyond males.

Without women, Land O'Lakes could fall behind its competition and miss a huge opportunity for female input in a company whose marketing largely targets female consumers. Recognizing that 24 members of your Board of Directors are appointed by Land O'Lakes' dairy and agriculture business, as Chairman, you have significant influence over the 3 non-voting advisory members at a minimum. We strongly urge you to make board diversity a priority, reconsider the structural framework that limits the representation of women among 24 of the 27 members, and leverage your existing female executives' talent. If Land O'Lakes is ready to voice its willingness to consider and evaluate women as potential board candidates, we are happy to extend our assistance and network of resources to find the best candidates to align with the company's strategic vision.

Best wishes,

Olga V. Mack  
Founder, Women Serve on Boards

Cc:

Rebecca Lentz  
Communications Manager

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<sup>4</sup> Ernst & Young Insights, Women on US Boards, <http://www.ey.com/GL/en/Issues/Governance-and-reporting/Women-on-US-boards---what-are-we-seeing>.