

Fast Fashion in 2026

On January 17, 2026, the Doomsday Clock was officially set to 85 seconds to midnight. Making it the closest we have come to enacting irreparable damage to planet earth and humanity as a whole. For those who are unaware, the doomsday clock is a symbol created by the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists, to show how close humanity is from a catastrophe. While it is not a real clock, it is an indicator of how much we have to do as a society to ensure a future for humanity.

Many things are factored into the Doomsday Clock, but one important feature is climate change. According to the World Meteorological Organization, 2024 was the warmest year ever recorded. The root of this cause is man-made, and exacerbated by massive corporations. For example, the fashion industry is a significant contributor to climate change through excessive carbon emissions and water pollution. Due to the changing media landscape, clothing trends are changing at a rapid rate. This has caused a high demand for cheap trendy clothing, with many of these items only being worn a handful of times. The rise in demand has led to the prevalence of fast fashion. Fast fashion is an approach to the design, creation, and marketing of clothing that emphasizes making trends quickly and cheaply. While fast fashion is done to the benefit of consumers' pockets, it is maintained through extremely unethical practices, such as low wages, poor working conditions, and negative environmental impacts. According to the World Wildlife Fund, it takes 2,700 litres of water to produce just one cotton t-shirt. Now imagine how much water is used when billions of clothing items are produced every year. In addition to the environmental harm caused during the manufacturing process, many items lead to excessive landfill waste. Of the 100 billion garments produced each year, 92 million tonnes end up in landfills.

It is the responsibility of major corporations and clothing companies to slow the rate of production before our planet is doomed forever. While many companies practice fast fashion in order to appeal to consumers, there is a growing demand from people to have accessible and sustainable clothing. This applies to every factor in the clothing industry, from evening gown to athleticwear, fast fashion affects us all.

As the CEO of Dick's Sporting Goods, I am taking steps towards a more sustainable future. Now

the question is: *Are you with me?*

STRATEGY NOTE: For my thought piece on environmental sustainability, I chose to focus on the impacts of fast fashion on the environment. Since Dick's Sporting Goods is a large clothing retailer, sustainability in fashion is central to their brand identity. With my thought piece I wanted to emphasize the importance of the clothing industry on our environment, and how it applies to every garment made. As Dick's Sporting Goods has taken steps towards sustainability, it is important for their CEO to urge others to do the same.