

NONPROFITS

Kering joins pledge to avoid Arctic shipping routes

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The Arctic is under threat to increased shipping routes. Image credit: Ocean Conservancy, photo by Rowan Romeyn

By STAFF REPORTS

French conglomerate Kering is among the companies joining a new pledge from Ocean Conservancy and Nike against using Arctic shipping routes.

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Announced on Oct. 24, the commitment aims to prevent firms from moving goods through Arctic waters, which are opening up as ice melts. While the potential new trade routes could be attractive to companies as a time saving tactic, the pact says sailing through these waters could have ecological impact on a global scale.

Shipping sustainability

Along with Kering, the Arctic Shipping Corporate Pledge has been signed by Gap Inc., H&M, Li & Fung and PVH Corp.

These companies have agreed to not intentionally send ships through the Arctic.

The pledge notes that the Arctic is seeing double the effects of climate change, as the region warms at a rate two to three times greater than elsewhere on earth. More ships crossing the Arctic seas could further escalate the impact.

There is also a greater risk for accidents such as oil spills or stranded ships, leading to additional ecological damage.

The Arctic regulates temperatures worldwide, making the prevention of climate change even more imperative.

Nike and Ocean Conservancy's pact aims to get ahead of a potential problem before it starts.



Ocean Conservancy says Arctic shipping routes would be detrimental to the ecosystem. Image credit: Adobe Stock, photo by A. Medvedkov

The pledge is also centered on the broader impact of shipping on the environment. Currently, moving product across waters accounts for about 3 percent of all greenhouse gas emissions, but shipping is not covered in the Paris Agreement.

"The dangers of trans-Arctic shipping routes outweigh all perceived benefits and we cannot ignore the impacts of greenhouse gas emissions from global shipping on our ocean," said Janis Searles Jones, CEO of Ocean Conservancy, in a statement. "Ocean Conservancy applauds Nike for recognizing the real bottom line here is a shared responsibility for the health of the Arctic and believes the announcement will spur much-needed action to prevent risky Arctic shipping and hopes additional commitments to reduce emissions from global shipping will emerge."

This pledge is the latest multi-company effort to combat climate change.

Earlier this year, a coalition of 32 fashion companies joined forces to tackle environmental issues such as climate change, biodiversity restoration and ocean protection, seeking to scale up their individual efforts with common objectives.

Led by luxury group Kering, under the mandate of France's President Emmanuel Macron, the Fashion Pact launched during the G7 meeting in August. While each of the pact participants has their own environmental initiatives, the project aims to leverage strength in numbers to enact change through the private sector ([see story](#)).

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