

Center for Health, Environment and Justice
Alaska Community Action on Toxics • The Alliance For A Clean Environment
Archdiocese of Manila Ecology Desk • Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League
Breast Cancer Action • Breast Cancer Fund • Center for Corporate Policy
Child Proofing Our Communities • Children's Health Environmental Coalition
Citizens' Environmental Coalition • Citizens for Safe Water Around Badger
Citizens Leading for Environmental Action and Responsibility
Clean Air Coalition of Western NY • Clean Production Action
Clean Water Action Alliance of Massachusetts
Clean Water Action Alliance of Minnesota • CNIID • Communities Against Toxics
Corporate Accountability Desk • Corporate Ethics International
Department of the Planet Earth • Earth Day Network • Eco-Cycle Inc • Ecology Center
Ecopedge • EAGLE (Environmental Association for Great Lakes Education)
Endometriosis Association • Environment California • Environmental Health Fund
Environmental Health Strategy Center • Friends of the Earth-US
Global Community Monitor • GrassRoots Recycling Network (GRRN)
Green Delaware • Greenpeace • The Green Guide Institute • Health Care Without Harm
Healthy Building Network • Huntington Breast Cancer Action Coalition
Indigenous Environmental Network • Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Zero Waste in Africa • International Indian Treaty Council
Kids for Saving Earth • Legal Environmental Assistance Foundation
MOMS (Making Our Milk Safe) • Maryland Public Interest Research Group
Massachusetts Breast Cancer Coalition • Mink Hills Center for Sustainable Development
Mother Earth Foundation – Philippines • Northern California Recycling Association
Oregon Center for Environmental Health • Oregon Physicians for Social Responsibility
Organic Consumers Association • Prevention Is The Cure, Inc. • Sciencecorps
Sierra Club • SIningYAPak (siyap)
Society for Direct Initiative for Social and Health Action • U.S. PIRG
Washington Toxics Coalition
Western New York Council on Occupational Safety and Health
Women's Environmental Institute • Women's Voices for the Earth

Aylwin B. Lewis
President and Chief Executive Officer
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March 8, 2006

Dear Mr. Lewis:

In our industry investigation on PVC (polyvinyl chloride) plastic use, we found that Sears Holding sells many products made out of or packaged with PVC plastic at Sears and Kmart. We are writing to urge you to replace PVC packaging and products with non-PVC alternatives (beginning with Sears' and Kmart's private label packaging and products) and sign the enclosed PVC-free pledge. Given our experiences working with other companies, we request that Sears and Kmart phases out the use of PVC in packaging within two years and PVC in products within three years. PVC is the most damaging plastic to human health and the environment.

In a recent retail survey in New York State, we found products such as Time Out bath and beauty products, over one hundred Craftsman products, Die Hard battery packs, Martha Stewart Everyday vinyl tablecloths, Essential Home vinyl tablecloths, and Essential Home vinyl shower curtains packaged or made out of PVC plastic. At the same time, both Sears and Kmart sells many similar products made out of or packaged in safer materials, such as EVA shower curtains.

In October, 2005, Wal-Mart announced their plans to phase out private label PVC packaging in two years. Other leading retailers and manufacturers have already committed to phasing out PVC in packaging and/or products including Wal-Mart, Marks and Spencer, Ikea, Microsoft, Mattel, SC Johnson, Nike, and Johnson and Johnson. We call on Sears Holding to join the growing ranks of major retailers and other companies that have committed to phasing out this toxic plastic. Sears Holding has an opportunity to demonstrate that it is not an industry laggard, but instead a leader in utilizing poison-free packaging and products. We are approaching other large retailers that have yet to phase out PVC and asking them to make this same commitment.

Enclosed you will find a detailed report that documents the environmental and health impacts of PVC production, use and disposal. These hazards include:

- **PVC production problems:** The production of PVC requires toxic chemicals as raw materials, including highly polluting chlorine, and cancer-causing vinyl chloride monomer and ethylene dichloride. PVC production has been found to expose workers and surrounding communities to vinyl chloride and studies have documented links between working in vinyl chloride production facilities and the increased likelihood of developing diseases including angiosarcoma of the liver, a rare form of liver cancer, and other non-cancer disorders. Our bodies are contaminated with poisonous chemicals released during the PVC lifecycle, such as mercury, dioxins, and phthalates, which may pose irreversible life-long health threats.
- **PVC usage problems:** Additives mixed with PVC resins such as stabilizers, plasticizers, and fillers can leach out of, or volatilize from, a PVC product during its useful life. Phthalates (plasticizers) may pose hazards, including the development of respiratory problems in children. One of the most common toxic additives is DEHP, a phthalate that is a suspected carcinogen and reproductive toxicant readily found in numerous PVC products.
- **PVC recycling problems:** PVC is very difficult to recycle because of the many different formulations used to make PVC products. PVC can never be truly recycled into the same material—it usually ends up being made into lower quality products. When PVC products are mixed in with the recycling of non-chlorinated plastics, such as in bottle recycling programs, they contaminate the entire recycling process. In fact just one PVC bottle can contaminate a recycling load of 100,000 polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles.
- **PVC disposal problems:** When produced or burned PVC plastic forms dioxins, a highly toxic group of chemicals that build up in the food chain. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency classified the most potent of the dioxins as a human carcinogen, estimating a 1 in 1,000 risk to Americans from cancer due to exposure. Dioxins are also associated with a wide range of non-cancer effects including altered sexual development, reproductive problems, diabetes and organ toxicity. As a consequence of these serious health threats, dioxins were among the first twelve chemicals targeted for elimination by an international treaty on persistent organic pollutants, signed by the United States.

- **Safer alternatives are available:** The good news is that safer, cost-effective, alternatives to PVC are readily available for virtually every use. Recognizing the myriad of environmental health threats posed by the PVC lifecycle, numerous governments and companies have already enacted PVC restrictions or have policies to eliminate PVC. A growing number of manufacturers, distributors and retailers are moving away from polluting products towards safer, more practical alternatives that are available today. An increasing number of savvy consumers are seeking PVC-free products. See the enclosed growing listing of companies that have committed to phasing out PVC.

This spring, our organizations will be educating consumers about products packaged or made out of PVC plastic. Our organizations have a combined membership of over one million consumers around the world who are very concerned about the use of toxic materials like PVC in consumer products. We would like to be able to state that Sears Holding is committed to phasing out PVC in its packaging and products, and is not lagging behind other industry leaders.

We would welcome the opportunity to set up a conference call with key PVC experts to meet with senior staff in charge of stakeholder engagement to discuss our concerns and opportunities for Sears Holding to address this critical issue. We look forward to hearing whether Sears Holding will sign the PVC-free pledge and phase out its use of PVC packaging and utilize environmentally sound materials, so we can let our members know. ***Please provide a response by April 10, 2006 to Michael Schade at CHEJ/BE SAFE via fax, e-mail or mail.*** We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

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