



For Immediate Release

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THIS EARTH DAY WOMEN FOR A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT Asks Retailers to “Mind the Store”

(Pittsburgh, PA – April 22, 2013) In cooperation with the Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families coalition, Women for a Healthy Environment joins the Mind the Store campaign. The campaign is asking the nation's top 10 retailers including Best Buy, Walmart, Target, Walgreens, CVS, Home Depot, Lowe's and Costco to move away from the *Hazardous 100*⁺ toxic chemicals in order to lift the consumer burden of trying to determine which products may contain harmful chemicals.

“The current federal law addressing chemicals is failing to protect public health, our communities and our environment,” explains Michelle Naccarati-Chapkis, executive director of Women for a Healthy Environment. “The American public shouldn't have to play detective when it comes to purchasing consumer products.”

Current regulations limit retailers, like consumers, from having access to health information regarding toxic chemicals. “Retailers do; however, possess the power needed to move the marketplace away from toxic chemicals.” Naccarati-Chapkis says.

The Mind the Store campaign is asking the public to send a letter to the big ten retailers requesting that they get tough on toxic chemicals. “We're confident that consumers can enlist their favorite retailers in confronting this problem,” said Andy Igrejas, Director of the coalition Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families that is launching the effort. “The links between many common chemicals and the chronic diseases that burden millions of families give this issue a great moral urgency that motivates people from all walks of life.”

In contrast to pesticides or pharmaceuticals there is no functioning regulatory system for the chemicals that end up in homes, workplaces and ultimately waterways through their

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presence in consumer products. Manufacturers are not required to submit health and safety studies when they introduce a chemical into the market. EPA even lacks the authority to place common sense limits on those chemicals that are known to be hazardous. For example, the toxic flame retardant chlorinated tris was removed from children's pajamas in the 1970s because it was linked to cancer. Nevertheless, a peer-reviewed study in 2012 found that the chemical was widespread in crib mattresses and blankets. Efforts to reform the system have so far been blocked by chemical industry opposition.

Under the current law, the Toxic Substances Control Act of 1976, virtually none of the 84,000 plus chemicals on the market today are regulated. The Safe Chemicals Act was recently introduced in Congress. This bill would drastically increase the safety of chemicals used in everyday products and communities. Specifically, the Safe Chemicals Act would:

- Require the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to identify and restrict the "worst of the worst" chemicals.
- Require basic health and safety information for chemicals as a condition for entering or remaining on the market.
- Upgrade scientific methods for assessing chemical safety.
- Arm the EPA with the authority it needs to restrict chemicals that pose health and environmental concerns.

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About Women for a Healthy Environment

Women for a Healthy Environment focuses on educating the general public on issues associated with food and consumer product safety, including sources of possible exposure to environmental toxins, and supports policy initiatives that better protect our health and environment. The organization collaborates with like-minded organizations to raise awareness on environmental health issues in the western PA region. More information about Women for a Healthy Environment is available at www.WomenForaHealthyEnvironment.org.