

May 27, 2008

The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman, Committee on Commerce, Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate
508 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable Ted Stevens
Vice Chairman, Committee on Commerce Science and Transportation
U.S. Senate
560 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

The Honorable John Dingell
Chairman, Committee on Energy and Commerce
U.S. House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Barton
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Inouye, Vice Chairman Stevens, Chairman Dingell, and Ranking Member Barton:

The undersigned organizations wish to express strong support for including Senator Feinstein's amendment in the final version of the Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act (CPSCA). Senator Feinstein's amendment would prohibit the manufacture, sale, or distribution in commerce of certain children's products and child care articles that contain phthalates. By eliminating unnecessary exposure to phthalates in children's products, the United States would join the European Union and 14 separate countries in requiring the safest toys for its children.

Over the last several decades, children have faced an increasingly challenging time just making it through what should be normal stages of growth and development. Of particular concern are chemicals found to have negative health impacts that are in products children use every day. Of primary interest to the undersigned is the use of phthalates, present in a variety of children's products including soft plastic toys and teething rings, which have been linked to developmental problems, such as premature breast development in girls, male genital defects, and reduced sperm quality.

Alternatives to phthalates already exist and are on the market. Some major manufacturers have already taken the responsible path toward eliminating these hazards from their products and major retail outlets such as Wal-Mart and Toys-R-Us are requiring that the products on their

shelves be phthalate-free. Yet, there currently are no laws in the U.S. prohibiting the use of these chemicals, and no way for parents to know whether the products they buy will help—or hinder—their child’s development.

States have already started taking action on this issue. California and Washington already prohibit the use of phthalates in children’s products and almost a dozen states have introduced similar measures. It is time for the federal government to ensure that children in all 50 states receive protection from unsafe chemical exposures in the toys they chew on and play with everyday. Several states have also taken the lead on protecting the health of their citizens from unsafe chemical exposures in other consumer products. The undersigned organizations are especially appreciative of Senator Feinstein’s inclusion of a “savings clause” in her amendment that would prevent the federal preemption of state efforts to enact stricter toy protections and regulate phthalates more strictly in other product categories.

The undersigned organizations strongly urge the CPSC Conference Committee to include the Feinstein Amendment prohibiting the use of phthalates in children’s toys and childcare articles in the reconciled version of the House/Senate Consumer Product Safety Commission Reform Act.

Sincerely,

AAIDD (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities)
Alaska Community Action on Toxics
Association of Reproductive Health Professionals
AWHONN (Association of Women's Health, Obstetric & Neonatal Nurses)
Breast Cancer Action
Breast Cancer Fund
Center for Environmental Health
Center for Health, Environment and Justice
Citizens for a Healthy Bay
Clean New York
Clean Water Action Alliance of Massachusetts
Coalition for Clean Air
Commonweal
Consumer Federation of America
Consumers Union
CREHM (Chicago Consortium for Reproductive Environmental Health in Minority Communities)
EarthJustice
Endometriosis Association
Environment California
Environmental Health Fund
Environmental Working Group
Greenpeace
Health Education and Resources
Healthy Building Network
Healthy Child Healthy World

Healthy Children Organizing Project
Illinois Maternal and Child Health Coalition
Illinois PIRG
INCIID (InterNational Council on Infertility Information Dissemination, Inc.)
INND (Institute of Neurotoxicology & Neurological Disorders)
Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy
Institute for Children's Environmental Health
Kids in Danger
Learning Disabilities Association of America
Maternal and Child Health Access
Minnesota PIRG
MOMS (Making Our Milk Safe)
MomsRising
Natural Resources Defense Council
Olympic Environmental Council
Oregon Center for Environmental Health
Oregon Environmental Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility- San Francisco Bay Area Chapter
Planned Parenthood Affiliates of California
Planned Parenthood Golden Gate
Planned Parenthood of Mar Monte
Planned Parenthood of the Rocky Mountains
PODER (People Organized in Defense of Earth & her Resources)
Project IRENE
Public Citizen's Congress Watch
RESOLVE: The National Infertility Association
Safe Food and Fertilizer
SisterSong Women of Color Reproductive Health Collective
Sources for Sustainable Communities
The American Fertility Association
The Annie Appleseed Project
US PIRG
Washington Toxics Coalition
WashPIRG
WHEN (Women's Health & Environmental Network)