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## **REPORT FINDS TOXIC TOYS STILL WIDELY SOLD AT TOYS R US AS 2010 HOLIDAY SEASON BEGINS**

***National Commission of Inquiry Supports Recommendations in Toxic Toys R Us Report, Health, Environmental, Consumer & Labor Groups Demand Action by Toymakers, Retailers & Congress***

(WASHINGTON) – On Thursday, Nov. 18, health, environmental, consumer and labor groups released the findings of the 2010 Toxic Toys R Us Report to the National Commission of Inquiry into Toxic Toys, chaired by Peter Orris, MD.

The report, available at [www.toxic toysrus.com](http://www.toxic toysrus.com), was commissioned by the Center for Health, Environment & Justice and Teamsters Office of Consumer Affairs as part of a long-term effort by health, environmental, consumer and labor activists to hold Toys R Us to its word, and ensure that it fully labels all toys containing toxic chemicals, and phases out PVC in toys.

"Two years ago, Toys R Us made parents a promise to reduce the use of toxic PVC in children's toys. Our tests show that Toys R Us has broken that promise," said Lois Gibbs, Executive Director of the Center for Health, Environment & Justice. "As a grandmother, I have to watch out for PVC toys on my grandbabies' Christmas lists. Santa should never have to say no because a toy is made out of a poison plastic. There should only be toys under the Christmas tree; not toxic additives like organotins"

Key findings in the report include:

- 72.5 percent of all toys/children's products tested contained high levels of chlorine, indicating they were likely made of PVC.
- 20.3 percent of all toys/children's products tested contained tin, indicating the likely presence of organotins in these toys.
- 52.9 percent of all toy packaging tested contained high levels of chlorine, indicating they were likely made of PVC.
- 52.9 percent of all toy packaging tested contained tin, indicating the likely presence of organotins.
- In the fall 2010 testing, only one of the 60 products that we tested was labeled as containing PVC.
- 81 percent of fall 2010 toys marketed to infants and toddlers 18-36 months and up in age contained chlorine, indicating they were likely made of PVC. 19 percent of these toddler-targeted toys contained tin, indicating the likely presence of organotins in these toys.

Toys R Us is the leading global specialty retailer of toys and juvenile products. In 2009, approximately 70 percent of US households with kids under 12 shopped at Toys R Us stores, and 84 percent of first-time mothers shopped at Babies R Us. However, the company's refusal to protect the health and safety of their customers puts at risk sales during the all-important holiday season. The potential consumer backlash also complicates efforts by Toys R Us owner KKR, and its business partners who hope to raise a reported \$800 million on the New York Stock Exchange by selling a stake into the company in a much anticipated IPO.

"On behalf of the 1.4 million members of our great union and their families, I have a message to KKR's Toys R Us – We don't want you poisoning our kids with your toxic toys this Christmas," said C. Thomas Keegel, International Brotherhood of Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer.

The report's findings show that despite a 2008 pledge by Toys R Us to move away from the sale of toys containing the toxic plastic PVC, the nationwide toy retailer continues to stock and sell an extensive assortment of toys and infant products that are made of and packaged in PVC, without even providing adequate labeling.

"Two years ago, millions of toys were recalled because they were contaminated with lead," said Jeff Gearhart, Research Director at the Ecology Center. "This new investigation found that Toys R Us and their suppliers have replaced one toxic hazard, lead, with another, organotins. Toys R Us needs to finish the job and get PVC and organotins out of the toys they sell once and for all."

With holiday shopping in full swing, health, environmental, consumer and labor advocates are concerned that these toys will find their way into millions of children's hands.

"In order for PVC to be used in toys, it must be mixed with lead, cadmium or organic chemicals containing tin. These chemicals are all toxic to children when ingested," said Dr. Peter Orris, Chair of the National Commission of Inquiry into Toxic Toys and Professor and Chief of Service, Occupational and Environmental Medicine at the University of Illinois at Chicago Medical Center. "In particular they are all linked with potential brain damage. Because these chemicals are not tightly bound to the plastic they can enter children's bodies when the children chew or suck on the toys or PVC-containing packaging that the toys come in."

The commission raised additional concerns in a statement released today. "It is widely known from studies undertaken by government agencies and independent researchers, that chemicals used in the manufacture of PVC and which result from the disposal of PVC end up in the bodies of infants, children and adults. These chemicals were never intended to be in the bodies of infants, children or adults and may be linked to a number of adverse outcomes including learning disabilities, behavior problems, certain cancers, and to reproductive and development effects."

"This report is the latest evidence that consumers often take toxic chemicals into their homes, without their knowledge, even though safer materials are available. The federal government is not minding the store and that has to change," said Andy Igrejas, Campaign Director of Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families. "Congress has to reform the 34-year-old Toxic Substances Control Act to protect American families from unnecessary toxic chemicals."

The report includes recommendations for Toys R Us executives and a call for congressional action on comprehensive toxic chemicals reform and monitoring compliance by the toy retailer with existing laws regulating toxics in toys.

To download the full report in PDF format, please visit [www.toxictoysrus.com](http://www.toxictoysrus.com).

### **About CHEJ**

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice exists to mentor the movement to build healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm caused by chemical and toxic threats. We accomplish our work by connecting local community groups to national initiatives and corporate campaigns. CHEJ works with communities to empower groups by providing the tools, strategic vision, and encouragement they need to advocate for human health and the prevention of harm.

Following her successful effort to prevent further harm for the people living in contaminated Love Canal, Lois Gibbs founded CHEJ in 1981 in order to continue the journey. To date, CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide. Details on CHEJ's efforts to help people and communities prevent harm can be found at <http://chej.org/>.

### **About the Teamsters Union**

Founded in 1903, the International Brotherhood of Teamsters represents 1.4 million family members, hardworking men and women who are part of the consuming public in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. For more information, visit [www.Teamster.org](http://www.Teamster.org).

### **About the National Commission of Inquiry Into Toxic Toys**

The National Commission of Inquiry into Toxic Toys is chaired by **Dr. Peter Orris**, and composed of **Charlotte Brody**, R.N., Director of Chemicals and Green Chemistry, Blue Green Alliance; **David O. Carpenter**, M.D., Director, Institute for Health & the Environment, University at Albany, SUNY; **Jeff Gearhart**, Research Director, Ecology Center, Ann Arbor, MI; **Philip J. Landrigan**, M.D., MSc, Professor and Chairman, Department of Preventative Medicine and Professor of Pediatrics, Director, Mt. Sinai Children's Environmental Health Center, Dean for Global Health, Mount Sinai School of Medicine, New York City and **Jerome Paulson**, M.D., FAAP, Associate Professor of Pediatrics & Public Health, George Washington University, Medical Director for National & Global Affairs, Child Health Advocacy Institute and Director, Mid-Atlantic Center for Children's Health & the Environment, Children's National Medical Center, Washington, DC