



Center for Health, Environment & Justice

***ATTN TV JOURNALISTS: B-Roll is available ***

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Dozens of Target Stores Protested Nationwide for Carrying Products and Packaging Linked to Cancer and Birth Defects

More than 60 Health & Environmental Organizations Urge Target to Join Wal-Mart, Microsoft and Other Retailers in Phasing Out Dangerous PVC (Vinyl) Toys, Shower Curtains and Other Products and Packaging

Massive Internet Campaign Released Featuring the Hilarious “Sam Suds and the Case of PVC, the Poison Plastic” at www.pvcfree.org

(Wednesday, October 11) – Target stores around the country today faced concerned mothers, scientists, environmentalists and customers who no longer want to purchase products and packaging made with PVC, commonly known as vinyl, sold by Target. Already Wal-Mart, Nike, Microsoft, Ikea, H&M, and Johnson and Johnson are phasing-out PVC, or polyvinyl chloride, products and/or packaging due to serious health and environmental problems. But Target has not responded to over 60 environmental organizations who have been urging the company since March, 2006 to begin replacing these hazardous materials with safe alternatives.

“Target may have the latest hip designs but their aisles are filled with products made from dangerous chemicals linked to cancer,” said Lois Gibbs, Executive Director of the Center for Health, Environment and Justice. “Target should phase out the poison plastic and switch to readily-available, safe alternatives, as other retailers and companies have done.”

Nearly 30 Target stores nationwide faced demonstrations today in CA, CT, FL, MA, MD, MI, NC, NJ, NY, OK, OR, TX, VA, and WA. Some protesters wore hazmat suits and carried a giant, inflatable rubber ducky (one of the products commonly made with PVC), held signs, handed out flyers to Target customers, and delivered letters to store managers. Also today a major Internet campaign was launched at www.pvcfree.org featuring a new spoof video “Sam Suds and the Case of PVC, the Poison Plastic” made by Webby Award winners, Free Range Studios. This video encourages viewers to “take action” and sign a petition to Target. So far, there has been no official response from Target.

“The production, use, and disposal of PVC products leads to the release of dangerous chemicals that can cause cancer, birth defects, and immune system disorders,” said Ted Schettler, M.D., MPH of the Science and Environmental Health Network. “Safer alternative materials avoid these hazards.”

Products at Target made with PVC include some children's toys, shower curtains, and packaging, among many others. CHEJ has identified over 100 products sold at Target packaged or made out of PVC.

What's Wrong With PVC?

PRODUCTION PROBLEMS: The production of PVC requires toxic chemicals, including highly cancer-causing vinyl chloride monomer and ethylene dichloride. "PVC plants have poisoned the air, water and soil of our communities," said Edgar Mouton, President of Mossville Environmental Action Now in Louisiana, where half of the U.S. PVC production facilities are located. "These plants are disproportionately located near low-income communities of color and have had devastating effects on our health and the environment."

USAGE PROBLEMS: Additives mixed with PVC can leach out of, or volatilize from, a PVC product. An EPA study found one new vinyl shower curtain can lead to elevated levels of indoor air toxics for over one month. Our bodies are contaminated with poisonous chemicals released during the PVC lifecycle such as mercury, dioxins and phthalates, which may pose irreversible lifelong health threats.

RECYCLING PROBLEMS: When PVC products are mixed in with 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 soda bottles.

DISPOSAL PROBLEMS: As much as 7 billion pounds of PVC are discarded every year in the U.S.. Dumping of PVC in landfills poses long-term problems from leaching of toxic additives into the groundwater, dioxin-forming landfill fires and toxic landfill gases. When produced or burned PVC plastic forms dioxins, a highly toxic group of chemicals that build up in the food chain. The U.S. EPA classified the most potent of the dioxins as a human carcinogen. Dioxins are also associated with altered sexual development, reproductive problems, diabetes and organ toxicity.

What's the Solution?

REPLACE PVC WITH SAFE ALTERNATIVES: Adidas, Bath & Body Works, the Body Shop, Crabtree & Evelyn, Firestone Building Products Company, Gerber, Honda, HP, Ikea, Johnson & Johnson, Kaiser Permanente, Lego Systems, Microsoft, Nike, Samsung, Shaw Industries, Toyota, Volkswagen, Volvo, and Wal-Mart are among the many companies who are phasing out PVC in products and/or packaging. Safer alternatives are widely available and effective for virtually all major uses in building materials, medical products, packaging, office supplies, toys and consumer goods.

DON'T BUY PRODUCTS MADE OF PVC: Products made out of PVC are often referred to as vinyl. Remember, bad news comes in threes. One way to be sure if packaging is made from PVC is to look for the number "3" inside, or the letter "V" underneath, the universal recycling symbol.

CHANGE POLICIES: Policy makers at the local, state and federal levels should enact and implement laws that steadily phase out the production, use, and disposal of PVC and lead to a complete phase-out and just transition of PVC.

ATTN JOURNALISTS: **The "Sam Suds" video plus background materials on PVC hazards and Target correspondence is available by visiting www.pvcfree.org B-Roll is also available for TV Reporters.**