



May 28, 2013

Dear Retailers:

We are writing to share our concerns about the “Mind the Store” campaign which is aimed at pressuring retailers to remove thousands of products families rely on each day from store shelves. We urge you to stand firm against this well-funded, anti-science campaign of fear. Families don’t need false alarmism; they need access to safe and affordable products that make their lives easier, safer, cleaner and more comfortable.

The Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families organization, which is leading the effort to ban these products, is notorious for spreading incomplete information about chemicals. While the organization portrays itself as a consumer “watchdog,” it is better described as an attack dog determined to destroy free enterprise and consumer choice. The organization has a pattern of relying on junk science; it capitalizes on the natural anxieties of parents by spreading scary stories about a long list of common products, such as cleaning supplies, furniture, children’s toys, food packaging, water bottles, and other products commonly sold in stores today.

The organization’s latest stunt is to pressure the nation’s top 10 retailers into removing certain products that contain “hazardous” chemicals. The organization recklessly demands retailers “identify whether a specific list of hazardous chemicals are in the products they sell, and if so, to develop a plan to remove them.”

Removing these products from the market will be a huge cost to shoppers and could even put consumers at risk. Among the chemicals the campaign wants removed from are phthalates, bisphenol-A, formaldehyde, and certain flame retardants. The campaign is quick to suggest these chemicals are hazardous at the level consumers are exposed, despite the significant body of scientific evidence to the contrary. Yet, the campaign fails to inform consumers that these chemicals often make products safer.

For example, flame retardants, which are now common in furniture and building materials, are largely responsible for the sharp decline in household fires since the 1970s. Formaldehyde, which is used in personal care products, helps prevent bacterial growth. Phthalates are added to plastics to make toys less breakable. And bisphenol-A, a chemical used in food packaging, safeguards against deadly botulism in canned food.

If retailers bow to this campaign, products won’t just become less safe, they will be harder to find and much more expensive. Consumers are already facing higher prices for food, fuel, and everyday products. Consumers who want to purchase products free of certain chemicals are

able to do so since there is no shortage of alternative products in the marketplace. Yet, those people should not dictate the informed choices the rest of us make.

Please join us in pushing back on these irresponsible organizations and stand firm in your commitment to continue offering Americans the products they choose, at a reasonable price.

Sincerely,

Julie Gunlock
Director, Culture of Alarmism Project
Independent Women's Forum

Angela Logomasini
Senior Fellow
Competitive Enterprise Institute

Jeff Stier
Senior Fellow
National Center for Public Policy Research

Joseph L. Bast
President
The Heartland Institute

Sabrina Schaeffer
Executive Director
Independent Women's Voice

Judson Phillips
Title Founder
Tea Party Nation

George Landrith
President
Frontiers of Freedom

Andrew Langer
President
Institute for Liberty

Paul Gessing
President
Rio Grande Foundation

Terrance Scanlon
Former Chairman, Consumer Product Safety
Commission
President, Capital Research Center

Dick Patten
President and CEO
President Family Business Defense Council

Todd Myers
Environmental Director
Washington Policy Center

Jim Martin
Chairman
60 Plus Association

H. Sterling Burnett
Senior Fellow
National Center for Policy Analysis

Elizabeth Whelan
President
American Council on Science and Health

Mattie Duppler
Executive Director
Cost of Government Center

Jack Boyle
Co-Founder

Paul Driessen
Senior Policy Advisor

Ohio Prosperity Initiative

John A. Charles, Jr.
President and CEO
Cascade Policy Institute

Myron Ebell
Director
Freedom Action

Rich Lowrie
PutGrowthFirst.com

Committee For A Constructive Tomorrow

Chuck Cushman
American Land Rights Association
League of Private Property Voters

Brett Healy
President
The John K. Maclver Institute for Public Policy

1875 I Street, NW Suite 500 Washington, DC 20006 tel 202.857.5201
www.cultureofalarmism.org