



## Center for Health, Environment & Justice

### NEWS RELEASE

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### **PVC Packaging Found to Contain Toxic Metals Banned in 19 States**

#### *Over Half of PVC Packaging Tests Positive for Lead or Cadmium*

**Falls Church, VA** – This week, thousands of supply chain executives and packaging moguls gathered in Atlanta, GA to discuss a sustainable future for product packaging. The Sustainable Packaging Forum could not come at a better time as a new study by the Toxics in Packaging Clearinghouse found toxic levels of heavy metals in over 50% of PVC packaging tested.

The report, [\*An Assessment of Heavy Metals in Packaging: 2009 Update\*](#) tested over 400 packaging samples with support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Fifty-two percent of flexible PVC packaging was found to contain lead or cadmium, violating laws in 19 states across the country.

“The widespread adoption of sustainable packaging practices is an important step in the greening of America. But this new report reminds us of how much of the packaging we bring into our homes is toxic to our health,” said Mike Schade, PVC Campaign Coordinator at the Center for Health, Environment & Justice. “With the holidays approaching, families across America will see an influx of PVC clamshell packaging that will put toxic lead and cadmium under the Christmas tree.”

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice (CHEJ) has long advocated against the use of toxic PVC plastic in consumer products and packaging. CHEJ has worked with major retailers such as Target, Wal-Mart and Sears Holdings to develop PVC phase-out plans to protect consumer health.

“We all know that lead is dangerous to young children, and yet we are wrapping our kids’ toys in toxic PVC,” said Lois Gibbs, Executive Director of CHEJ. “Given the alarming nature of this new report, we hope to see more retailers take a proactive approach to keeping this poison packaging off store shelves.”

Already retailers like Wal-Mart have begun requiring suppliers to provide a certificate of compliance with state toxics in packaging laws or submit packaging samples for testing. Other retailers have recalled products packaged in the lead-contaminated PVC.

The report, *An assessment of Heavy Metals in Packaging: 2009 Update* is available for download from the TPCH website at [www.toxicsinpackaging.org](http://www.toxicsinpackaging.org).

## **About CHEJ**

The Center for Health, Environment & Justice exists to mentor the movement to build healthier communities by empowering people to prevent harm in as many ways, and for as many people, as possible. We believe this can happen when people and groups have the power to play an integral role in promoting human health and environmental integrity. CHEJ's role is to provide the tools, the direction, and the encouragement to these people and groups, so that they can build strong, healthy communities where they live, work, learn, shop, play and pray. 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 mentoring others seeking to prevent harm. CHEJ provides mentoring assistance to communities, homeowners, families and individuals throughout the country. To date, CHEJ has assisted over 10,000 groups nationwide. Currently, CHEJ is mentoring community groups in Florida, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina and Ohio. Details on CHEJ's efforts to help people and communities prevent harm can be found at <http://chej.org/>.