



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 25, 2007

Contact:
Virginia Cramer, 202-675-6279

Sierra Club Takes the Next Step in Protecting Kids from Lead Poisoning

The Sierra Club today took the next step to limit children's exposure to toxic lead- putting 10 companies on notice for failing to notify EPA of health risks associated with their products. With almost 30 recalls of lead-containing children's products this year alone, most of which were manufactured and imported from China, the Sierra Club is acting to protect U.S. children from further potential hazards by ensuring the laws protecting our children are adequately enforced.

"Companies need to be held accountable for failing to report dangers posed by their products," said Jessica Frohman, co-chair of the Sierra Club's National Toxic Committee. "The fact that we are seeing some repeat offenders proves that we are unfortunately unable to trust that violators will voluntarily reform themselves. Laws ensuring product safety reporting need to be strictly enforced to protect this country's kids."

After discovering a problem with one or more of their products, the ten companies requested that the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CPSC) issue a voluntary recall, however, the companies failed to also notify the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as required by law. Notifying the EPA is important because it is the EPA that is responsible for investigating toxic chemicals such as lead in commerce and taking action to protect the public. The agency has greater authority than CPSC to get to the source of the problems.

As part of a prior settlement agreement with the Sierra Club, EPA sent more than 100 letters to companies with a track record of potential problems warning them of the legal obligations to report poisonous products to EPA as well as to CPSC.

"Violators simply have no excuse," said Frohman. "It's time to enforce the law to protect children from toxic toys and other products that may lead poison them."

The companies must provide EPA with information beyond simply disclosing the source of the hazard. They must provide EPA with studies and other information identifying where and how the lead got into the children's product, including information on the factories that made the product. This information will enable EPA to identify other products made by the factory that may have been contaminated by lead. This additional information is essential to proactively protect children and will prove especially helpful when applied to imports coming from China, where the overwhelming majority of kids' toys are manufactured.

The ten companies are:
A&A Global Industries
Atico International USA, Inc.
Cardinal Distributing Co., Inc.
Dollar General Merchandising, Inc.



SIERRA
CLUB
FOUNDED 1892

Oriental Trading Company, Inc.
RC2
Rhode Island Novelty
Samara Brothers, LLC
Target Stores
U.S. Toy Co., Inc.

Background:

Lead can affect the brain development of young children and has been directly linked to a wide range of learning disorders. While lead paint in older homes is the major cause of childhood lead poisoning, many children are also being exposed to toxic lead through the toys they love and the products they use. More than 300,000 American children have blood levels high enough to cause irreversible damage, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Every one of these cases is avoidable. (Tips on keeping children safe from lead toys can be found at <http://www.sierraclub.org/healthycommunities/lead/> .)

After a child in Minnesota died as a result of eating a pendant containing lead on a pair of Reebok shoes last year, the Sierra Club petitioned both EPA and the Consumer Product Safety Commission urging preventative action. The Commission granted the petition and has taken steps to ban lead in toy jewelry and now the EPA is taking action as well.

For more information visit www.sierraclub.org/lead