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REP. WAXMAN CALLS FOR NEW STANDARDS TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM LEAD IN TOY JEWELRY AND OTHER PRODUCTS

WASHINGTON — Today Rep. Henry A. Waxman called on the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) to take immediate steps to protect children from lead in toy jewelry and other products for young children. The request follows five recalls of millions of pieces of toy jewelry with dangerous lead levels. The most recent recall occurred just two days ago.

"The problems that led to these massive recalls have not been fixed," said Rep. Waxman. "Government action to keep lead out of children's products is long overdue."

Currently, CPSC recommends a series of tests to measure the presence of lead in children's products, but the recommendation is not legally binding. In practice, the industry standard is to test only a product's surface coating, a method that can fail to detect major risks to children.

The recent recalls of nearly 150 million of pieces of toy jewelry demonstrate the inadequacy of the voluntary industry testing program. In each case, the manufacturers involved say they conducted pre-market testing according to industry standards set by the American Society of Testing Materials. Yet this testing did not identify serious lead hazards to children.

As a first step to increasing protection for children, Rep. Waxman's letter to CPSC urges the agency to strengthen the testing requirements for lead in children's products. "CPSC should ultimately ban the use of this toxic metal altogether," he wrote.

The complete letter is available at http://www.democrats.reform.house.gov.