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REP. WAXMAN ANNOUNCES LEGISLATION TO BAN LEAD IN PRODUCTS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Citing the failure of the Consumer Product Safety Commission to protect children from hazardous levels of lead in consumer products, Rep. Henry A. Waxman today announced plans to introduce legislation banning lead from toys, toy jewelry, and other items for children under age six.

"Lead in toy jewelry and other products for young children is dangerous and unnecessary," Rep. Waxman said. "The simple solution is to get the lead out."

High doses of lead can cause seizures and even death, while low doses can cause impaired learning and behavioral problems. Recent recalls of nearly 150 million pieces of hazardous toy jewelry have demonstrated that standards set by the Consumer Product Safety Commission are not working.

The agency's latest action today, which permits up to 175 micrograms of accessible lead in each piece of toy jewelry, is grossly inadequate. According to pediatric experts, ingesting just one piece of toy jewelry at this level can cause serious harm.

Moreover, the agency's new policy does not address potential risks posed by other products – including metal toys, metal utensils, and metal parts of children's clothing – and it is not a binding regulation.

On January 13, Rep. Waxman wrote the CPSC a letter expressing concern about the series of recalls and urging decisive action. The Commission's inadequate response led him to introduce the legislation banning lead.

"The agency's job is to block products that pose a risk to children, not permit them," Rep. Waxman said. "If the agency will not set a standard that protects children, Congress must."

The January 13 letter and the bill are available at http://democrats.reform.house.gov.