

For Immediate Release
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CONSUMERS UNION COMMENDS MINNESOTA FOR LEADERSHIP IN BANNING BPA

Yonkers, N.Y.—Consumers Union commends Minnesota for becoming the first state in the nation to ban bisphenol A (BPA) from plastic baby bottles and sippy cups starting in 2011. Governor Tim Pawlenty signed the law yesterday. BPA—a chemical used in polycarbonate plastic, including some baby bottles, cups, sports bottles, food-storage containers and the linings of cans—has potential links to a wide range of serious health effects. Recently, Suffolk County, N.Y. became the first county in the country to impose a similar ban.

“Given the existing and growing body of scientific knowledge about the health risks of BPA to consumers—and the growing consumer and industry movement against this chemical—we strongly support Minnesota’s action to protect public health and ban BPA from baby bottles and drinking containers,” said Dr. Urvashi Rangan, Technical Director for Policy, Consumers Union, nonprofit publisher of Consumer Reports. “Some companies are already moving ahead to remove BPA from the marketplace but nationwide, consumers will remain at risk until federal action is taken.”

In March, the Suffolk County, New York legislature unanimously passed a bill to ban BPA. That bill was signed into law in April. Federal legislation to ban BPA in all food and beverage containers, the “Ban Poisonous Additives Act of 2009,” was introduced in Congress on March 20, 2009. The bills, which are identical, are sponsored by Reps. Edward Markey (D-Mass.) and Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Chuck Schumer (D-N.Y.).

Six of the largest manufacturers of baby bottles recently decided they will no longer sell bottles made with BPA. In addition, retailers such as Babies ‘R’ Us, Safeway, Target, Toys ‘R’ Us, CVS and Wal-Mart are in the process of or have already phased out selling baby bottles with BPA, and chemical giant Sunoco, acknowledging the safety concerns about BPA, recently announced they would restrict the sales of the controversial chemical in baby bottles and food containers for children under three.

Several states, such as California, Connecticut, New York and Michigan are also considering BPA bans. In 2008, the Canadian government banned its use in baby bottles. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Science Board is currently pursuing additional research on the issue.

In August 2008, the FDA reiterated its stance that BPA was safe for humans and has since come under intense criticism from the scientific community including its own Science Advisory Board. At the February 2009 Science Board Hearing, FDA tacitly acknowledged the serious health concerns regarding BPA, but the agency has not yet revised the prior position that no public health safeguards should be implemented at this time.

Consumers Union has repeatedly called on the FDA to ban BPA materials from food and beverage contact containers and has urged that at the very least, immediate steps be taken to protect infants and children. A study by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has shown that 93 percent of Americans excrete some BPA in their urine suggesting that exposure to BPA is likely widespread and ongoing. Moreover, new studies suggest that BPA seems to stay in the body longer than previously believed. For more information, please visit Consumer Reports’ website, www.greenerchoices.org/bpa.

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