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CONSUMERS UNION COMMENDS WASHINGTON STATE FOR BANNING BPA

Yonkers, N.Y.—Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, commends Washington state for becoming the fifth state in the nation to limit the use of the chemical bisphenol A (BPA) in plastic products intended for children and sports bottles. Governor Christine Gregoire will sign the bill today.

Under the new law, plastic containers made with BPA that are designed to hold food or beverages for children under three years old such as sippy cups and baby bottles may not be manufactured, sold, or distributed in Washington. A House amendment was added to the bill to include plastic sports bottles. It is scheduled to take effect July 1, 2011, and will also include sports bottles as of July 1, 2012.

“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 Washington’s action to protect public health and ban BPA from baby bottles and sports bottles,” said Dr. Urvashi Rangan, Technical Director for Policy, Consumers Union. “Consumers Union believes that there is enough scientific evidence to date to warrant a ban on BPA in all food contact products now.”

BPA—a chemical found in the linings of cans and in polycarbonate plastic, including some sports bottles, food-storage containers and baby bottles—has potential links to a wide range of health effects. The diseases and health effects to which BPA has been linked include an increased risk of diseases or disorders of the brain, reproductive and immune systems.

In January, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) changed its position on the safety of BPA, voicing “some concern” about its effects on children and infants, but stopped short of calling for a ban. Previously the agency had said trace amounts of the chemical that leach out of food containers are not dangerous. But the agency has since agreed to reconsider that decision after its own advisory committee declared it relied on a small number of industry-sponsored studies.

Connecticut, Maryland, Minnesota, and Wisconsin have passed bans on BPA in food and drink containers intended for children 3 and younger. Chicago and Suffolk County, N.Y., have taken similar action. Bills are also pending in California, Missouri, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Pennsylvania, Vermont and Washington, D.C. Canada became the first country to ban BPA use in baby bottles in 2008.

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 have 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, announced they would restrict the sales of the controversial chemical in baby bottles and food containers for children under three.

In its December 2009 issue, *Consumer Reports* tested canned foods, including soups, juice, tuna, and green beans and found that almost all of the 19 name-brand foods contained measurable levels of BPA. The findings are noteworthy because they indicate how widespread and, in some

cases, significant, exposure to the chemical is. A recent CDC study showed that more than 90 percent of Americans have BPA in their urine suggesting that exposure to BPA is likely prevalent and ongoing.

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. For more information, please visit *Consumer Reports'* website, www.greenerchoices.org/bpa.

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