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Consumer Agency to Ban Harmful Chemicals in Children's Toys

WASHINGTON – In a major victory for public health, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) voted today, 3-2, to ban several harmful phthalate chemicals from plastic used in children's toys and child care articles.

The agency finalized its rule on phthalates today in response to a legal settlement approved by a judge in a lawsuit brought by the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC), the Environmental Justice Health Alliance (EJHA) and Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (BCPP) against the CPSC last December. The final rule permanently bans five types of phthalates from use in children's toys and child care articles.

"This will especially protect children who face overlapping exposures to phthalates in their communities, in household products, and even in the toys they play with," said **Michele Roberts, National Co-Coordinator of the Environmental Justice Health Alliance**. "CPSC's action is a major step, but it is the 'tip of the iceberg' in exposures some face—especially disproportionately exposed Black, Brown and poor communities. It's unconscionable that our children have been exposed to toxic phthalates despite their known health concerns. These added protections were two years overdue—but this move is better late than never. We ask the CPSC and other government agencies to continue taking sound, science-based steps to protect the health of the most vulnerable among us: our children."

"At long last, the CPSC is moving in the right direction to phase out the toxic chemicals known as phthalates," said **Jose Bravo, Coordinator for the Campaign for Healthier Solutions**. "Our work has just begun. Now we will focus on making sure that products in dollar stores will be truly phthalate free. In many instances, dollar stores are the only places where we can shop. This is our reality as people of color and low-income communities become increasingly healthy food deprived. Literally, the proof will be in the pudding."

"Parents will rest a little easier tonight now that the CPSC has acted to protect children from dangerous phthalates in toys and childcare articles," said **Nancy Buermeyer, Breast Cancer Prevention Partners** senior policy strategist. "When we championed a federal ban on phthalates in toys, we never guessed it would take over nine years to finish the job of protecting children from these hormone-disrupting chemicals, which have been linked to breast cancer and many other health issues!"

"This is a big victory for children's health," said **Avinash Kar, Senior Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council**. "These chemicals in children's toys and child care articles are a known health risk. In banning them, CPSC is following the advice of its scientific experts and doing precisely what Congress directed the agency to do in a 2008 law it passed overwhelmingly."

BACKGROUND

Phthalates are commonly used as a plastic softener in children's toys and child care articles, such as teething rings. Numerous studies have linked phthalates exposure to interference with hormone production and reproductive development, especially in young children.

U.S. government data show that for many phthalates, exposure is significantly higher in children age 6-11 and in people of color.

In late 2014, the CPSC proposed to ban five types of phthalates in children's toys and child care articles due to these health risks. But the agency never finalized that rule, despite a deadline under the law that has long since passed.

For more background, click [here](#) and [here](#), respectively, for blogs by Daniel Rosenberg and Avinash Kar, senior attorneys in the Health program at NRDC.

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Breast Cancer Prevention Partners (BCPP) is the leading science-based policy and advocacy organization working to prevent breast cancer by eliminating our exposure to toxic chemicals and radiation. Learn more at www.bcpp.org.

The **Natural Resources Defense Council** (NRDC) is an international nonprofit environmental organization with more than 3 million members and online activists. Since 1970, our lawyers, scientists, and other environmental specialists have worked to protect the world's natural resources, public health, and the environment. NRDC has offices in New York City, Washington, D.C., Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Bozeman, MT, and Beijing. Visit us at www.nrdc.org and follow us on Twitter [@NRDC](https://twitter.com/NRDC).

The **Environmental Justice Health Alliance** (EJHA) is a national network of communities of color, Indigenous communities, and low-income communities that are disproportionately impacted by toxic chemical hazards. EJHA works to address the multiple harms caused by the hazardous chemical and energy industries — including waste, pollution, and health hazards — and support community-based solutions that improve health and well-being. Visit us at www.Ej4All.org

The **Campaign for Healthier Solutions** is a diverse coalition of over 100 environmental justice, medical, public health, community, and women's organizations working with discount retailers toward responsible hazardous chemical policies and better corporate citizenship. Visit us [here](#).