



Dear Chairman Dorgan:

In the past few months, more than 14 million Chinese-made children's toys—from cars to castles to birthday hats—have been deemed dangerous and recalled. These safety concerns, ranging from lead paint to choking hazards, have debilitating, long-lasting and sometimes fatal effects. Every day, we are learning more about dangerous chemicals like lead, phthalates, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and Bisphenol A (BPA) that are all too commonly found in the toys we give our children and infants.

American parents have lost confidence in the safety of toys they buy for their children.

As the recalls continue, and with the holiday shopping season in full swing, we are writing to request that your subcommittee consider holding hearings to investigate how relentless pressure put on suppliers by Wal-Mart, and other large retailers, impacts consumer safety.

As you know, Wal-Mart's continued pressure on suppliers has forced many American companies to shut down domestic plants and move manufacturing to China. Of course, Wal-Mart is not the only company to do so, but Wal-Mart is the #1 importer of Chinese goods. Seventy percent of products on Wal-Mart's shelves come from China. If Wal-Mart were a country, it would be China's sixth largest trading partner, ahead of Germany and England. As you wrote last year in *Take This Job and Ship It*, "Wal-Mart has been a leader in constructing this new business model... Wal-Mart is the leader of the parade and proud of it."

Now, seemingly endless recalls of Chinese products raise serious questions about how Wal-Mart's harsh pressure on suppliers impacts consumer safety. According to *The Miami Herald*, "As Chinese companies are pushed by toy companies to do more internally on safety, they're being pulled in the other direction by giant retail cost-cutters like Wal-Mart." When huge retailers like Wal-Mart pressure Chinese suppliers to cut costs, they cut corners, and our children pay the price.

Wal-Mart, the world's largest retailer, controls roughly one-third of America's toy market, making it the number one seller of toys in the United States. Wal-Mart is also the #1 customer for each of the four companies that have issued major toy recalls in 2007. These four companies—Mattel, Hasbro, RC2 Corporation, and Graco—have recalled a combined 13 million toys in the past 10 months.

For these reasons, we urge you and members of the subcommittee to take a careful look at how Wal-Mart's narrow focus on the bottom line may be contributing to the recent explosion of unsafe products that threaten our children's safety.

Thank you for your consideration and for your leadership on this issue. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

WakeUpWalMart.com  
National Consumers League  
Sierra Club  
Wal-Mart Watch  
Alaska Community Action on Toxics  
Oregon Center for Environmental Health  
Kids for Saving Earth  
Minnesota Pesticide Awareness  
Take Back the Air  
Farmworker Association of Florida  
Environmental Assn for Great Lakes Education - EAGLE  
Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

