### SAFE MARKETS SUCCESS STORY

# Walmart Promotes Safer Chemicals Adoption in Household Cleaning, Infant, Pet, Beauty and Personal Care Products



#### THE PROBLEM

Toxic chemicals are widespread in consumer products sold by big retailers. Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families' Mind the Store campaign has developed a list of hazardous chemicals commonly found in products that retailers can prioritize for action, the Hazardous 100+1 List of Chemicals of High Concern. The Hazardous 100+ list represents a small subset of all inherently hazardous chemicals of concern to which humans and the environment may be exposed in certain consumer products. Scientists have established links between exposures to many of these chemicals and chronic diseases and health conditions, including cancer, infertility, learning and developmental disabilities, behavioural problems, obesity, diabetes, and asthma.

### THE SOLUTION

The Mind the Store campaign is challenging the nation's biggest retailers to adopt comprehensive chemical policies to identify, disclose, eliminate and safely substitute these and other hazardous chemicals in products.





PREPARED BY

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In September 2013 Walmart announced their Policy on Sustainable Chemistry in Consumables,<sup>2</sup> a policy they adopted to drive toxic chemicals out of products they sell and promote the transition to safer products and ingredients. They followed that with an update to the policy with their "Sustainable Chemistry Implementation Guide"<sup>3</sup> in February 2014.

The policy and implementation guide are both available online and include specific goals to identify and disclose formulations for many products (primarily household cleaning, personal care, beauty and cosmetic products, pet toys, and certain infant products) and to reduce, restrict, and eliminate use of "priority" and "high priority" chemicals at their Walmart and Sam's Club stores in the U.S. They state that, "all suppliers are expected to reduce, restrict and eliminate use of priority chemicals using informed substitution principles" to transition to safer chemicals or non-chemical alternatives. Walmart has identified over 1,000 "Priority Chemicals" for action, which they publicly identified via the authoritative scientific lists they are on, and approximately 10 "High Priority Chemicals" as a starting point for suppliers, which they have not publicly disclosed.

### MARKET IMPACT

Walmart is the largest retailer in the U.S. and globally, with more than 11,500 stores in 28 countries. For the fiscal year that ended January 31, 2015, Walmart increased net sales





These Success Stories of market shifts to safer chemicals were developed based on the campaigns and projects of partners in the Workgroup for Safe Markets (www.SafeMarkets.org), which is coordinated by the environmental health and justice collaborative Coming Clean.

to \$482.2 billion. Their actions can have an enormous impact in transforming the marketplace away from toxic chemicals.<sup>4</sup>

## How chemical ingredient disclosure will be implemented

Walmart's policy requires suppliers to "provide full online ingredient disclosure" in covered products online by 2015 and on product packaging by 2018 if products still contain "priority" chemicals, providing a major incentive for suppliers to reduce and eliminate harmful chemicals. It stops short of requiring disclosure of all ingredients in fragrances, but encourages suppliers to do so. They recommend that disclosure should include "full disclosure of all ingredients including those typically protected under trade secrets (e.g. fragrances)" as well as "known residuals, contaminants and by-products".

## How the policy will be adopted and monitored in key product categories

The company has not stipulated a chemical phase out date but is using the Wercs<sup>5</sup> to notify suppliers when products they sell contain either a "Walmart Priority Chemical" or "Walmart High Priority Chemical." Using the Wercs system, they will send an e-mail to each supplier indicating which products contain "high priority chemicals" and, at some point in the future, any time a product entered contains a "priority" or "high priority" chemical, the supplier will automatically be notified. They will also use the Wercs database to track the number of priority chemicals in products, as well as their reduction, using various metrics including quantifying reductions by weight, number of products, number of suppliers, and sales volume. Walmart's policy commits the company to monitor progress through its Sustainability Index and through the Wercs, and begin publicly reporting on progress in January 2016; however they will not report on how companies score in their system.

The company's implementation guide embraces the "principles of alternatives assessment" and compiled a list

### "Ultimately we want to reduce and eliminate and restrict these chemicals, and that's our goal."

 WALMART'S DIRECTOR OF PRODUCT SUSTAINABILITY<sup>6</sup>

of publicly known methods, tools, and databases aligned with "The Commons Principles of Alternatives Assessment" that suppliers may use to avoid regrettable substitution, such as the GreenScreen.

Walmart has also committed to strive towards formulating and labeling its private brand products in accordance with the U.S. EPA's Safer Choice program, beginning with cleaning products and expanding to other categories as the program grows. In 2014 Walmart partnered with Target to host a "Beauty and Personal Care Product Sustainability Summit" to jointly encourage suppliers to address toxic chemicals.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WALMART'S POLICY

Mike Schade, Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families (author)

Walmart Sustainability Information: http://www.walmartsustainabilityhub.com/app/answers/detail/a\_id/316

#### ENDNOTES

- ${\tt 1 \; Hazardous \; 100+List \; of \; Chemicals \; of \; High \; Concern: } \; {\it http://saferchemicals.org/methodology}$
- 2 Walmart Policy on Sustainable Chemistry in Consumables: http://www. walmartsustainabilityhub.com/ci/fattach/get/4686/o/filename/Chemical+Policy+201 4+02+21+FINAL.pdf
- 3 Walmart Sustainable Chemistry Implementation Guide: http://www. walmartsustainabilityhub.com/app/answers/detail/a\_id/316
- 4 Walmart Corporate & Financial Facts: http://corporate.walmart.com/\_news\_/ walmart-facts/corporate-financial-fact-sheet
- 5 The Wercs: http://www.thewercs.com/markets/retail
- 6 Walmart aims to reduce 10 toxic chemicals—but won't divulge which. http://www.theguardian.com/sustainable-business/walmart-toxic-chemicals-cosmetics-cleaners
- 7 Common Principles for Alternatives Assessment: http://www.turi.org/Our\_ Work/Research/Alternatives\_Assessment/Commons\_Principles\_for\_Alternatives\_ Assessment

### LEARN MORE ABOUT MOVING TO SAFE MARKETS

These Success Stories of market shifts to safer chemicals were developed based on the campaigns and projects of partners in the Workgroup for Safe Markets (www.SafeMarkets.org), which is coordinated by the environmental health and justice collaborative Coming Clean.

- The Coordinators of the Workgroup for Safe Markets: http://safemarkets.org/about-us/contact-us
- · Success Stories of Chemical Disclosure and Safe Substitution: http://safemarkets.org/resources-to-promote-safer-chemicals-and-products/success-stories
- Five Essential Practices for Retailers, Brand Owners & Suppliers to guide transition to safer chemicals: http://safemarkets.org/resources-to-promote-safer-chemicals-and-products/essential-practices