

Dingell, Stupak Request Interview with Von Eschenbach on Bisphenol A

Washington, D.C. – Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, today requested an interview with Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach to discuss the agency's decision-making process relating to the agency's safety assessment of the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA).

For Immediate Release:
October 15, 2008

Contact: Jodi Seth or Brin Frazier, 202-225-5735

Dingell, Stupak Request Interview with Von Eschenbach on Bisphenol A
Committee Asks for Information, Documents

Washington, D.C.
– Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, and Bart Stupak (D-MI), Chairman of the Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee, today requested an interview with Food and Drug Administration Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach to discuss the agency's decision-making process relating to the agency's safety assessment of the chemical Bisphenol A (BPA). The lawmakers also made an information and document request.

"The ability of the FDA to protect the American public has been called into question," said Dingell. "We would like to hear straight from the head of this agency how exactly it came to the conclusion that this chemical is safe."

"The FDA is a science-based agency, but in the case of bisphenol A, the science may have been ignored," said Stupak. "We want Dr. von Eschenbach to take responsibility for his agency's decision and explain why his agency appears to be cherry-picking the science around BPA."

Dingell and Stupak began

investigating BPA in January 2008 and have asked the largest liquid infant formula manufacturers to find a safer alternative and remove the chemical from their product packaging, which the manufacturers have agreed to do. Retailers such as Wal-Mart and Toys & R Us have also announced plans to pull products containing BPA from their shelves. Some scientists have raised concerns that BPA affects brain development and could contribute to diabetes, cancer, and obesity. Based on these health concerns, attorneys general from Connecticut, New Jersey, and Delaware recently asked 11 companies to stop using BPA in their baby bottles and baby formula packaging.

Yesterday, the Committee announced it would widen its investigation into the safety of the chemical BPA to include a potential conflict of interest involving the chair of the FDA's advisory panel and a large donation from a medical device manufacturer who believes the chemical is safe.

The chair of the FDA's advisory panel looking into the safety of BPA, Dr. Martin Philbert, heads a research center that received a \$5 million donation from Charles Gelman, a retired medical equipment manufacturer who has stated that BPA is "perfectly safe" and has also indicated that he has told Dr. Philbert of his opinion several times. The FDA requires advisory panel members to disclose such potential conflicts of interest, and in the case of the BPA panel, it specifically asked for any financial interests between panel members and medical device manufacturers. Dr. Philbert did not disclose this donation.

For more information about related hearings or the Committee's ongoing investigation, visit <http://energycommerce.house.gov/Investigations/Bisphenol.shtml>.

[Click here to view today's letter to FDA Commissioner Andrew von Eschenbach.](#)

-30-

Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515