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NEWS

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PROPOSED EPA CHLORINE STUDY "DECLARES WAR ON MODERN SOCIETY," VINYL INSTITUTE SAYS

WAYNE, New Jersey, February 15, 1994 -- The Vinyl Institute, representing the vinyl (polyvinyl chloride, or PVC) industry, has joined the Chemical Manufacturers Association, the Society of the Plastics Industry, the Chlorine Chemistry Council and other chlorine-dependent associations in denouncing the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's proposal for a study that would devise a way to reduce or completely eliminate the use of chlorine and chlorine-based products. The proposal is part of the agency's recommendations for reauthorization of the Clean Water Act. If such an elimination plan were implemented, it would have an immediate impact on all vinyl products: vinyl, the world's second largest selling plastic material, is over 50 percent chlorine-based.

"We are adamantly opposed to this study for a number of reasons," said Bob Burnett, executive director of the Vinyl Institute. "First, it's based on the completely false assumption that there's a need for blanket reduction or elimination of all chlorine-based products. In the case of vinyl, there's no scientifically valid evidence to suggest that the manufacture and use of this material represents an environmental hazard -- information that we could have provided to the EPA, had we been asked.

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"Second, the vinyl industry already is well-regulated by government under numerous standards and operates well within them, including those set by the EPA itself. Additional regulation or, worse, a complete ban, simply would not support the EPA's objectives for water quality enhancement.

"Finally, the proposal was formulated with absolutely no input from industry. President Clinton has promised to run an open, inclusive Administration with provisions for risk/benefit analysis. EPA's action entirely violates the spirit of that promise."

Burnett noted that this proposal would affect virtually every segment of the plastics industry, not just vinyl manufacturing and use. "Essentially, this proposal declares war on modern society," he said. "Everyone in the United States, not just those of us who work in the plastics industry, stands to suffer an enormous impact as a result of this recommendation. When you consider the number and scope of products that potentially could be eliminated under this proposal, the concept is almost dumbfounding."

The vinyl industry and its customers employ roughly 100,000 people in the U.S. Research has estimated that the cost to replace vinyl in just 14 major applications would require an additional investment of \$974 million in new equipment and cost consumers about \$6.7 billion more each year to purchase products made with substitute materials. Vinyl has been used for over 50 years in hundreds of consumer and industrial products. Common applications include house siding, wire and cable insulation, packaging, water distribution pipe, blood bags, computer housings and floor coverings.

The Vinyl Institute is a national trade association representing the leading manufacturers of vinyl resins, vinyl feedstocks, additives and film and sheet products. The Institute is a division of The Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc., and is headquartered in Wayne, New Jersey.

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