

WASHINGTON, DC (May 10, 2011) – Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-IL), Rep. Ed Markey (D-MA), Rep. Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and 7 other members of Congress have called on the Food and Drug Administration to take immediate action to protect workers and consumers from serious health effects caused by use of formaldehyde-containing hair straighteners. Formaldehyde is a known carcinogen.

□ Across the country, complaints from hair salon workers and customers of nose bleeds, breathing problems, vomiting, and hair loss have led to the troubling discovery of the use of formaldehyde in popular hair straightening beauty products. Studies from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) show that hair straighteners such as Brazilian Blowout contain hazardous levels of formaldehyde that can cause cancer and other health problems.

In a letter to FDA Commissioner Dr. Margaret Hamburg, the members of Congress called for a voluntary recall of brands like Brazilian Blowout Solution and Acai Professional Smoothing Solution, for better labeling practices and warnings, and for a review of whether formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing chemicals should be banned due to their health risks.

The \$50 billion cosmetic industry is the least regulated consumer products on the market. As a result, federal law allows companies to use virtually any ingredient in cosmetics and personal care products—even chemicals that are known to damage human health and the environment.

“This is a dramatic example of why we urgently need to close the gaping holes in the outdated federal law that allows hazardous chemicals in cosmetics products,” said **Rep. Jan Schakowsky**. “I am planning to re-introduce the Safe Cosmetics Act, legislation which would ensure that cosmetics do not contain harmful ingredients and would give workers and consumers confidence that the products that they use will not damage their health.”

**Rep. Ed Markey:** “American consumers and workers should not be blown over by a Brazilian blowout’s toxic fumes. High levels of formaldehyde in hair straighteners pose a serious hazard to the health and safety of hair salon patrons and workers. The Food and Drug Administration must immediately call for a voluntary recall of these potentially carcinogenic hair straightening products and continue to evaluate whether to ban formaldehyde from hair straighteners altogether. I will work with my colleagues to reintroduce the Safe Cosmetics Act to help to protect American consumers from being exposed to dangerous and possibly carcinogenic ingredients.”

**Rep. Tammy Baldwin:** “The health risks caused by formaldehyde-containing hair straighteners, including the Brazilian Blowout Solution, demonstrate the pressing need to see that the products we use are safe. The Safe Cosmetics Act is critical to ensuring that personal care products do not compromise the health of workers and consumers.”

Representatives John Conyers, Nita Lowey, Earl Blumenauer, Jim Moran, Barbara Lee, Judy Chu and Ted Deutch also signed the letter to the FDA, a copy of which is attached.

[Copy of the Letter sent to the FDA](#)

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