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Mr. Gary M. Philbin  
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The Learning Disabilities Association of America, American Network of Community Options and Resources, The Arc of the United States, Autism Society of America, National Respite Coalition, TASH: Equity, Opportunity & Inclusion for People with Disabilities, and 19 state affiliates across the United States are concerned about toxic chemicals in products linked to neurological harm.

The number of American children with learning and developmental disabilities has been climbing over the past decade, reaching nearly one in six by 2008<sup>1</sup>, and certainly higher as of today.

Also in the past decade, the science on environmental factors that may be contributing to neurodevelopmental disorders has grown dramatically, both in the amount and quality of the research. Major epidemiologic studies of children with learning and developmental disorders, including autism and ADHD, are revealing the influence of environmental factors on brain development, beginning at conception, or even prior to conception, and continuing throughout gestation and the early years of life<sup>1-11</sup>. In fact, the National Academy of Sciences states that environmental factors, including toxic chemical exposures, contribute to over a quarter of these disabilities<sup>11</sup>. LDA is especially concerned about chemicals linked to neurological harm, like lead, phthalates, cadmium, and flame retardants.

LDA is working to eliminate the preventable causes of these disabilities, including chemical exposures. That is why LDA is concerned about toxic chemicals found in everyday consumer products sold at Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, and other dollar stores, where many parents and teachers shop. LDA also co-leads Project TENDR (*Targeting Environment and Neuro-Developmental Risks*), a collaborative of 50 leading scientists and health providers, and child advocates, who have released a scientific consensus statement on toxic chemicals contributing to learning and developmental disorders. We are also a proud member of the Campaign for Healthier Solutions, and are ready and willing to work with discount retailers on ways to provide safer products for all customers.

As your customers, we want the safest, healthiest products for children and adults, but it's often impossible to know which products are safe and which ones are not. In 2015, 81% of the products tested

by the Campaign for Healthier Solutions contained at least one hazardous chemical above levels of concern. Simply put, this is unacceptable, and we hope you agree that action needs to be taken.

In the past few years, major retailers like Walmart and Target have adopted chemical policies and have begun phasing out some of the worst toxic chemicals.

We applaud the actions that Dollar Tree took in December 2016, when you reached out to your suppliers with the list of 17 chemicals to be removed from the products that you purchase from them. Many of the chemicals that concern us are also on the list that you sent your suppliers. Sadly, we had to learn about the letter to your suppliers through the media instead of directly from you.

**Shareholders and costumers need a transparent process and deserve to know where things stand in terms of making progress on these 17 chemicals.** We also ask that Dollar Tree leadership meets with the Campaign for Healthier Solutions and that you where things stand on phasing out these 17 chemicals by 2020 as well as next steps to ensure all products are free of neurotoxic and other harmful chemicals.

On another positive note, the Campaign for Healthier Solutions has retested some of the products that were found in previous testing to contain lead, and in more recent testing did not test positive for lead. We applaud you for this progress. Now we want to meet with you and have a conversation about drafting and implementing a corporate chemical policy that will safeguard your consumers, your workers and your shareholders. We would also like to have a deeper conversation about how we can work together and make Dollar Tree a leader in the discount retail market.

It is not enough to say the company meets state and federal guidelines. We know there is no safe level of lead, but it is in many consumer products including costume jewelry, table runners, and other products tested from Dollar Tree, Family Dollar, Dollar General, and 99 Cents Only. We know that chemicals like phthalates found in plastics and as a fragrance can have negative health impacts at very low levels, and there is also the cumulative effect of chemicals exposure from multiple products.

Furthermore, prenatal exposure to many dangerous chemicals may result in long-term consequences, including lower IQ levels, learning, and behavioral problems. In order to protect children, we need to protect pregnant women, and therefore the goal should be that all household products are free of harmful chemicals. **To accomplish this, Dollar Tree needs to have a comprehensive chemical policy that restricts and eliminates harmful chemicals from your supply chain.** It's good for business, good for shareholders, good for customers, and good for our children.

Parents need to know Dollar Tree is doing everything you can to protect your customers from hazardous chemicals in your products. We need Dollar Tree to tell your suppliers you will not accept any products with harmful chemicals linked to learning disabilities, autism, ADHD, or other neurological impacts. **We look forward to hearing where you are in this process, and strongly encourage you to get lead and other neurotoxins out of all household products.**

Please do what's right for your consumers, your workers, and your shareholders and ensure all products you sell are truly safe.

Thank you for your attention to this critically important issue. We look forward to hearing from you. Please contact Tracy Gregoire at [tracy@ldame.org](mailto:tracy@ldame.org).

Sincerely,

Tracy Gregoire, Healthy Children Project Coordinator  
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