



Statement

For Immediate Release

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TODAY SHOW REVERSES 40 YEARS OF INDUSTRY SCIENCE STRIKES NEEDLESS FEAR IN MILLIONS

ARLINGTON, VA (April 13, 2008) – On April 9th the NBC *Today Show* aired a “Consumer Alert” story about the overall safety of plastics, plastic bottles and, in particular, Bisphenol-A (BPA) which is used to make polycarbonate containers. This story was full of inaccuracies which the American Chemistry Council (ACC) brought to NBC’s attention. The next day – in what first appeared to be an attempt to clarify the situation – NBC made a bad situation worse by further confusing the issue, repeating many of the same inaccuracies, and giving consumers additional bad information. NBC owes the public and scientific community an apology – and the public deserves to be told the truth.

NBC’s reports are inconsistent with forty years of accepted scientific assessments from researchers and countries around the world on BPA. NBC has furthermore needlessly confused, misled, and instilled fear in millions of American families by suggesting that various widely used plastic products are unsafe. NBC was alerted to these errors yet the record has not been corrected. Examples of disregard for the facts include the following statements:

- 1) NBC: “there is no safe level of BPA.”
Fact: the safety of Bisphenol A has been extensively evaluated, and its safety confirmed by numerous government and scientific assessments worldwide. Reviews conducted by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the European Union, the Japanese Ministry of the Environment, the Harvard Center for Risk Analysis – and many others – all support continued use of BPA in consumer products used today. See: www.bisphenol-a.org.
- 2) NBC: “plastics in general are unsafe to use in the microwave.”
Fact: Plastics can be and are safely used in the microwave. Many plastic food containers are clearly marked safe for microwave use. And a Dutch study shows that microwaving polycarbonate bottles in particular has no impact on BPA migration. The usual caution about microwaving polycarbonate is related to evenness of heating and avoiding hotspots in the food or liquid being heated, not chemical migration. The plastics industry has published extensive information on best safety practices when using plastics intended for use in the microwave. That information can be found at: http://www.plasticsinfo.org/s_plasticsinfo/sec_level3_collapsed.asp?CID=656&DID=2593
- 3) NBC: Suggested with words and graphics that consumers use particular resin identification codes to determine safety.
Fact: This is an inappropriate use of [resin identification codes](#). Those codes signify the type of resin used to make the plastic, to help sort plastics at a municipal recycling facility.



They are NOT intended as a label or to convey other consumer, constituent or additive information. All plastics intended for food use — whether designed for microwaving or not — must meet stringent U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) safety standards before they are allowed on the market. When manufacturers develop individual plastic packaging products, they often conduct additional testing based on a product's intended use.

- 4) NBC: Urged caution using plastics marked with “[recycling symbols 3, 6 and 7](#)” because of alleged concern with BPA.

Fact: The plastics marked with resin identification codes 3 and 6 are **not** based on monomers that would necessarily contain BPA at all. Resin identification code 7 is formally designated as an “All Other” category. Thus, although a small number of plastics in this category could conceivably contain BPA, referring to the recycling symbol is not the way to find that out. At a minimum there should have been clarification that the 7 designates a group of materials, including renewable bio-based plastics.

- 5) NBC: Dr. Nancy Snyderman, NBC Chief Medical Editor, recommended a website as “one of the best” for consumer information.

Fact: The website is neither objective nor non-biased regarding plastics. To the contrary, it is operated by an organization that employs a staff member who testifies regularly in efforts to ban BPA in products. This site terms PVC the “toxic plastic” and expresses views on health risks from plastics which in general are one-sided. Much of the scientific peer-reviewed and published information about plastics is not acknowledged, and sometimes disparaged, on this site. It is an international trade policy advocacy site -- not an impartial or complete science site, let alone a source for the science and chemistry of plastics' safety.

NBC *Today Show's* use of unscientific assertions and inaccuracies in two programs directly contradicts decades of known and published sound science, including FDA findings. The American Chemistry Council believes NBC has an obligation to viewers to provide balance and accuracy in its reporting. Therefore, NBC should allow equal time and attention to a clear presentation of known science by an industry expert and should retract and *correct* these alarming, unnecessary and confusing statements of misinformation about plastics, BPA and family health concerns.

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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people's lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care[®], common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues, and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a \$635 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation's economy. It is one of the nation's largest exporters, accounting for ten cents out of every dollar in U.S. exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation's critical infrastructure.

