Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 11, 2007

The Honorable Bart Stupak
Chairman
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Ranking Member
House Energy and Commerce Committee
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigation
2322A Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Stupak and Ranking Member Whitfield:

Thank you for your continued oversight regarding a multitude of issues of national concern. In recent months, this Committee has conducted an aggressive investigation regarding a variety of recalled products that could cause serious harm to consumers. Thank you again for your leadership regarding this important safety issue.

I am sure that you are aware of the most recent consumer product recall, this time involving a children's toy—Thomas the Train. As you probably know, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) issued a recall on June 13, 2007, for the popular Thomas & Friends Wooden Railway toys. According to CPSC's press release, the 1.5 million toys that were recalled had lead contaminated paint, which can cause serious health effects if ingested. Children are prone to place items in their mouths, so it is very likely that many children consumed small doses of lead during the two and half years the products were on the market. For your information, attached is a copy of the CPSC press release.

While the consumption of any amount of lead in children is disturbing, what is equally disturbing is the country of origin of the product. Sadly, Thomas the Train is only the latest in the line of Chinese product recalls; the list also includes melamine laced wheat gluten found in pet food and diethylene glycol laced toothpaste. It's hard to imagine that these "additives" were added by mistake. We strongly urge the leadership of this Committee to conduct an intense investigation regarding the recall of Thomas the Train and other recalled products made in the Republic of China.

Thank you again for your time and consideration regarding this imperative issue. We look forward to further discussing this matter with each of you. As always, if we can be of any assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,

Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress

Greg Walden
Member of Congress

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