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Vinyl Industry Concedes to New York State: Vinyl Flooring Not a "Green" Building Material

*Major Setback To Industry Efforts to Greenwash
"Worst Plastic For The Environment"*

(Albany, NY) In a victory for the growing movement of environmentalists, local governments and companies working to avoid the use of hazardous vinyl plastic (also known as polyvinyl chloride or PVC), the vinyl industry today dropped its lawsuit contesting New York State's refusal to recognize vinyl flooring as a "green" building material. The lawsuit had been scheduled to be heard before the state Supreme Court on June 6.

"There's nothing green about vinyl. It's a highly toxic product that contaminates our homes, bodies, and the environment," said Paul Bogart of the Healthy Building Network. "Other states should take note of New York's victory and implement policy changes to reduce the use of vinyl."

The Resilient Floor Covering Institute, a flooring trade association, abruptly withdrew its lawsuit just one week before presenting its case asserting vinyl flooring is a "sustainable" product that should be eligible for the State's Green Building Tax Credit program. New York State had rejected vinyl flooring for the program based on the product's substantial environmental problems, including creation of dioxin, which has been identified as the most potent carcinogen on earth.

Vinyl flooring is not banned under the tax credit; builders and consumers are still free to choose these products, however it will not be eligible for a tax credit. There are many viable alternatives to vinyl flooring with a lesser environmental impact.

Vinyl is the worst plastic for the environment and human health. New York State is at the forefront of a movement to end the use of vinyl, particularly in building construction, which accounts for 75 percent of all vinyl plastic manufactured, including pipes, flooring, windows and roofing. For example, the City of Seattle has an official policy to reduce the use of vinyl, and the City of San Francisco is considering policies that will favor alternatives to vinyl plastic.

Healthcare giant Kaiser Permanente is eliminating vinyl from many medical products and its hospital facilities, and dozens of other major building projects including the EPA headquarters in Washington, DC, and the Sydney Olympics, have reduced vinyl plastic in favor of greener products.

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