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*News Statement*

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## **Increasing Number of Nanotech Consumer Products Reaching Marketplace Triggers Concern**

WASHINGTON – The new nanotechnology consumer products inventory released by the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies is the best available source of information on the diverse and promising applications of nanotechnology. But it also triggers concern.

Many of the products in the inventory are not subject to public review of their possible health or safety risks. For example, the inventory lists more than 30 cosmetic products, products that are applied to the skin or sprayed in the air, yet the consumer knows little or nothing about the health effects of these products. The public needs to have more assurances about nano safety than it has now.

Presently, most people have never heard of nanotechnology. We now have a unique opportunity to “get it right,” to introduce a major new technology without incurring significant public resistance, and without gambling on the health of citizens, workers, consumers, or the environment.

If we fail, we run a double risk. First, we run the risk of unanticipated harm to health and the environment. Second, we run the risk of public rejection of the technology. Our past experiences with agricultural biotechnology, nuclear power, and asbestos, for example, illustrate how tragic either of these risks could be.

Industry, as well as the general public, has a big stake in ensuring that nanotechnology is developed responsibly from the start. And adequate government oversight of nanotechnology is an essential part of getting it right.

Federal agencies have maintained that they have adequate statutory authority to deal with nanotechnology. But in my view, the record clearly shows that the existing regulatory structure for nanotechnology is not adequate. Some programs, like the Food & Drug Administration’s oversight of drugs, are sufficient. But the regulatory structure as a whole, particularly in the area of consumer products and cosmetics, suffers from three types of problems: gaps in statutory authority, inadequate resources, and a poor fit between some of the regulatory programs and the characteristics of nanotechnology.

These shortcomings need to be addressed, along with the need for more research into nanotechnology's possible short- and long-term effects on human health and the environment.

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For more information about the Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies, see:  
<http://www.wilsoncenter.org/nanotech> or <http://www.nanotechproject.org>

The **Project on Emerging Nanotechnologies** was launched in 2005 by the Wilson Center and The Pew Charitable Trusts. It is dedicated to helping business, governments and the public anticipate and manage the possible health and environmental implications of nanotechnology.