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**CONSUMERS UNION AND ORGANIC CONSUMERS ASSOCIATION FILE
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION PETITION
URGING ACTION ON DECEPTIVE 'ORGANIC' LABELING PRACTICES OF
PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS**

Washington, D.C.—Consumers Union, the nonprofit publisher of *Consumer Reports*, and the Organic Consumers Association (OCA), today filed a petition with the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) requesting action on the widespread and blatantly deceptive labeling practices of several “organic” personal care brands that do not comply with the National Organic Program (NOP). A copy of the complaint can be found at:

http://greenerchoices.org/pdf/FTC_personalcare_petition_Mar2010.pdf

The complaint, filed on behalf of the estimated 50 million consumers of organic products, urges the FTC to investigate and consider prohibiting the pervasive use of organic claims on personal care products that do not comply with the NOP.

“Consumers can be deceived and misled by the misuse of the ‘organic’ label on personal care products,” said Dr. Urvashi Rangan, Ph.D., Director of Technical Policy at Consumers Union. “The Federal Trade Commission must act quickly and decisively to ensure consumers’ ongoing trust in the ‘organic’ label for all products, including personal care.”

Currently, “organic” personal-care products don’t have to meet the same government standards required for organic foods. While some ingredients may be certified as organic, the product itself may not be and may contain unapproved synthetic ingredients. Some manufacturers confuse the issue by including the word “organic” in their brand name, even though it isn’t clear how much of their product is actually certified as organic. Others promote certified organic ingredients on the label when in fact they may only make up a small percentage of a chemical-heavy formula.

While the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Organic Standards Board (NOSB) enforces strict standards for the labeling of organic food, it has not adequately regulated or enforced organic regulations with respect to personal care products. Last year, the NOSB formally recommended that the NOP regulate personal care products to ensure that any use of the word “organic” is backed up by third-party certification to USDA organic standards. In January, OCA filed a complaint with the USDA, urging that agency to regulate cosmetics as they do food.

“The USDA National Organic Program has irresponsibly allowed the market for organic personal care products to be overrun by false organic claims,” said Ronnie Cummins, Executive Director of the Organic Consumers Association. “This kind of deception ends up eroding consumer confidence in all organic products, even food. Hopefully, the FTC can motivate the USDA to protect organic consumers.”

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