

July 15, 2009

The Honorable Margaret Hamburg, M.D.
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Building 1 Room 2217
Silver Spring, MD 20993-0002

Re: FDA Sunscreen Guidelines

Dear Commissioner Hamburg:

On behalf of the Environmental Working Group (EWG), I congratulate you on becoming the Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). I also wish to present you with the enclosed umbrella to get you safely through your first sweltering Washington summer.

It would have been much simpler, and more convenient for you, if we could have just recommended a sunscreen that meets FDA's guidelines for safety and efficacy. FDA started working on those standards back in 1978, the year before President Obama received his high school diploma from Punahou School in Honolulu.

Thirty-one years later, the American public is still waiting for FDA to finish the job.

Skin cancer has long since been recognized as a major public health problem. One million new cases are diagnosed in this country each year, the incidence is rising, and the cost of treatment runs into the billions. Yet, in the absence of formal guidance from FDA, companies continue to make billions of dollars annually misleading consumers about the protection from the sun their products offer.

As a result of FDA's interminable and indefensible delays, tens of millions of Americans buy products each year that they erroneously believe are protecting them from cancer, premature aging and other skin damage caused by the sun.

In August 2007, we were encouraged when, not long after we issued our first safety rankings of nearly a thousand sunscreen products, FDA finally published a *draft* of the sunscreen guidelines it had promised the public for years.

FDA set a deadline for public comments for 90 days, after which it promised to publish a final rule.

FDA is now telling reporters that yet *another* summer season will pass—that would be the 30th summer, by our count—with no FDA guidelines in place to help consumers find safe, effective sunscreens. Evidently, the agency *hopes* to finalize the rules by the end of 2009.

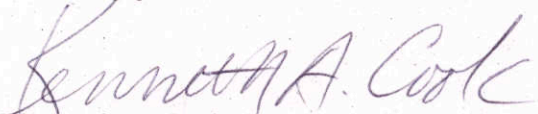
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Page 2 of 2

So we send you this UV-protective umbrella (separate cover) with our best wishes for success in your time at FDA. Lynn Rose, who lost her husband to malignant melanoma, developed the umbrella for her company, Soleil Chic (<http://www.soleilchic.com>), which advocates "UV Protection With Style."

You should also use a good, safe sunscreen for protection against reflective exposures if you are out in the sun for any length of time. I am enclosing a list of EWG's 2009 sunscreen recommendations.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kenneth A. Cook". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name and title.

Kenneth A. Cook
President