Congress of the United States
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CANDY CONTAMINATED WITH LEAD STILL FOR SALE IN THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Today Rep. Henry A. Waxman, Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, and Rep. Jan Schakowsky notified Dr. Gregg Pane, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Health, that a brand of candy known to contain unsafe levels of lead is available for purchase in the District.

"It's unacceptable for any child to be harmed by lead in candy," Rep. Waxman said. "Parents need to know that dangerous products are for sale, and public health agencies need to get contaminated candy off the shelves and out of kids' hands."

"We have strong lead paint laws here to assure that kids don't the residue, but it is worse to actually feed children lead in their candy," said Congresswoman Norton. "The District will want to closely monitor the manufacturer's pledge to search and destroy."

"The happy 'kid in a candy store' may be buying lead-laced treats," Rep. Schakowsky said. "Even the most diligent parent can't protect her child, since lead is never listed as an ingredient. Responsible public officials must step in."

The minority staff of the Committee on Government Reform found small packages of the candy, Lucas Limón, for sale for 39 cents in a store on Columbia Road in Adams Morgan. In the last five years, this product, which has been marketed as a seasoning but consumed by children as a candy, has repeatedly tested positive for unsafe lead levels. One small package may contain as much four to six times the amount of lead permitted in a child's daily diet.

Lucas Limón, a product of Effem Mexico, a subsidiary of Mars, Inc, is banned in the state of Illinois and the city of Milwaukee. California and Nevada have issued health advisories about the product. The company stopped manufacturing and marketing Lucas Limón and several other related products last year.

The candy was discovered as part of an ongoing congressional investigation of lead in children's products, candy wrappers, and candy. Repeated exposure to even low doses can cause impaired learning and behavioral problems.

Additional information on the investigation and the text of the letter is posted at www.democrats.reform.house.gov

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