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New Report Finds That the Tobacco Industry Still Denies Overwhelming Scientific Consensus About the Harms of Tobacco Products

Today Rep. Henry A. Waxman released a new report examining recent statements submitted by the five largest cigarette manufacturers in the civil suit brought by the Department of Justice. The report finds that the companies still deny the overwhelming scientific consensus on critical health issues.

“While the tobacco companies say they have changed, the report shows that they still refuse to admit the dangers of smoking,” said Rep. Waxman. “The companies also continue to dodge the truth about control of nicotine, marketing to children, and document destruction. Their statements are irresponsible and underscore the importance of holding the industry accountable.”

As criticism of the industry has accelerated in recent years, and calls for product regulation have grown, tobacco companies have cast themselves as newly reformed responsible corporate entities. The report examines whether the industry has reformed, by analyzing the truthfulness of statements made by the five largest cigarette manufacturers before the federal court.

The report finds:

- Four of five major tobacco companies still question whether smoking causes disease, even though medical and scientific authorities universally accept that smoking causes lung cancer, heart disease, emphysema, and other diseases.
- All five major tobacco companies deny that environmental tobacco smoke causes disease in nonsmokers, even though medical and scientific organizations, including the U.S. Surgeon General and the World Health Organization, have found that environmental tobacco smoke causes disease.
- Four of five major tobacco companies fail to admit that nicotine is addictive, even though leading medical and scientific authorities agree that nicotine is addictive.

The report also finds that individual tobacco companies are unwilling to take responsibility for well-documented corporate behavior. The report documents that Philip Morris continues to deny it has control over nicotine, R.J. Reynolds continues to deny it has marketed to children, and British American Tobacco continues to deny document destruction.

Rep. Henry A. Waxman is the ranking Democrat on the Government Reform Committee. The full report is available at the website of the minority office of the Committee on Government Reform: www.reform.house.gov/min.