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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Call for Entries
EPA and MBDC Launch Design Challenge

WASHINGTON, DC, 26 March 2003 -- The EPA Office of Solid Waste, in partnership with McDonough Braungart Design Chemistry (MBDC), is pleased to announce the launch of the Cradle to Cradle Design Challenge for E-Commerce Shipping Packaging and Logistics. The premise of the challenge is to rethink and redesign e-commerce shipping packaging for a cradle-to-cradle life cycle. Designs will consider packaging and its complementary life cycle, including: the systems needed to facilitate cyclical material flows; the ecological and human health characteristics of the materials; and how physical design facilitates reuse and recyclability.

The design challenge is specifically targeted at the shipping packaging associated with the suburban home delivery of Internet purchases of books, CDs, DVDs, and videos, including systems for packaging recovery. Because a cradle-to-cradle solution will require collaboration among a variety of stakeholders including packaging manufacturers, logistics specialists, e-commerce companies, and industrial designers, cross-disciplinary group submissions are encouraged. All interested groups and individuals are invited to participate. Student entries will be judged separately.

Entries will be evaluated on a variety of levels from packaging materials to recovery system considerations. Winning entries will be selected based on the degree to which cradle-to-cradle principles are incorporated and will be displayed at Pack Expo in Las Vegas, Oct. 13-15, 2003. The entry deadline is August 15, 2003. For more details about the design challenge, go to www.mbdc.com/challenge/ (Website goes live on April 21, 2003).

Internet-based companies ship millions of books, CDs, DVDs and videos each year. A large percentage of the shipping packaging associated with these purchases, primarily corrugated paperboard and plastic, ends up in landfills. Not only does this represent a significant loss of material, but in the U.S. landfills are also one of the largest manmade sources of methane, a potent greenhouse gas.

E-commerce presents an opportunity for system-wide change because of its dependence on highly integrated technology for product distribution and returns. In addition, e-commerce shipping packaging is representative of the much larger arena of packaging used by the catalog and parcel shipping industries.

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