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## **OCA & Dr. Bronner's Challenge** **Weak Ecocert & OASIS Standards** *Cease & Desist Letters Sent to Certifying Standards* *of Fraudulent "Organic" Claims on Personal Care*

Anaheim, CA - Based on extensive surveys, organic consumers seek cleansing ingredients in "Organic", "Organics" or "Made with Organic" branded and labeled soaps, shampoos and body washes, that are made from organic as distinct from conventional agricultural material, produced without synthetic fertilizers, herbicides or pesticides, and such ingredients should be free of petrochemical compounds.

Ecocert is a French-based certifier with a standard that allows not only cleansing ingredients made from conventional versus organic agriculture, but also allows inclusion, in the cleansing ingredients contained in products labeled as "Made with Organic" ingredients, of certain petrochemicals such as Amidopropyl Betaine in Cocamidopropyl Betaine. Even worse, despite Ecocert's own regulations prohibiting the labeling as "Organic" of a product containing less than 100% organic content, Ecocert in practice engages in "creative misinterpretation" of its own rules in order to accommodate clients engaging in organic mislabeling. For instance, Ecocert certifies the Ilove brand's cleansing products to contain less than 50% organic content, noted in small text on the back of the product, where all cleansing ingredients are non-organic including Cocamidopropyl Betaine which contains petroleum compounds. Yet the product is labeled "Organic." Amazonian Avocado Bath & Shower Gel. Another instance is Stella McCartney's "100% Organic" CARE line certified by Ecocert that labels products as "100% Organic" that are not 100% Organic alongside ones that are; the labels of products that are not 100% organic simply insert the word "Active" before "Ingredients." In allowing such labeling, Ecocert simply ignores the requirements of its own certification standards. Furthermore, the primary organic content in most Ecocert certified products comes from "Flower Waters" where up to 80% of the "organic" content is just regular tap water that Ecocert counts as "organic".

Explicitly relying on the weak Ecocert standard as precedent, the new Organic and Sustainable Industry Standard ("OASIS")—a standard indeed developed exclusively by certain members of the industry with no consumer input-- permits certification of products outright as "Organic" (rather than as "Made with Organic" ingredients) even if such products contain hydrogenated and sulfated cleansing ingredients such as Sodium Lauryl Sulfate made from conventional agricultural material grown with synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, and preserved with synthetic petrochemical preservatives such as Ethylhexylglycerin and Phenoxyethanol. [Reference: OASIS Standard section 6.2 and Anti-Microbial List] The organic content is required to only be 85%, which in water and detergent-based personal care products, means organic water extracts and aloe vera will greenwash conventional synthetic cleansing ingredients and preservatives.

The OASIS standard is not merely useless but deliberately misleading to organic consumers looking for a reliable indicator of true "organic" product integrity in personal care. Organic consumers expect that cleansing ingredients in products labeled "Organic" be made from organic not conventional agriculture, to not be hydrogenated or sulfated, and to be free from synthetic petrochemical preservatives. Surprisingly, companies represented on the OASIS board, such as Hain (Jason "Pure, Natural & Organic"; Avalon "Organics") and Cosway (Head "Organics",) produce liquid soap, bodywash and shampoo products with petrochemicals in their cleansers even though use of petrochemicals in this way is not permitted even under the very permissible OASIS standard these companies have themselves developed and endorsed.

Dr. Bronner's and the Organic Consumers Association plan to pursue legal remedies on Earth Day April 20<sup>th</sup>, if they do not receive responses indicating these certifiers will cease certifying outright organic claims in California by September 1, 2008.