

Attention Environmental, Consumer and Lifestyle reporters

For Immediate Release

**“THE SIX SINS OF GREENWASHING” – NEW STUDY FINDS MISLEADING GREEN
CLAIMS IN 99% OF PRODUCTS SURVEYED**

OTTAWA – NOVEMBER 19, 2007 – Buyers beware - that so-called “green” product is likely stretching the eco-truth according to the *Six Sins of Greenwashing* study released today by TerraChoice Environmental Marketing.

The *Six Sins of Greenwashing* found that of 1,018 common consumer products ranging from toothpaste to caulking to shampoo to printers, randomly surveyed for the study, 99% were guilty of “greenwashing.”

“The products we surveyed made a total of 1,753 claims, and 99% per cent committed at least one of the *Six Sins of Greenwashing*,” says TerraChoice President Scott McDougall. “The *Six Sins of Greenwashing* will equip consumers with tools to help figure out the truth about environmentally friendly products.” The study and consumer tip sheets can be found on the Web at www.terrachoice.com.

The environmental shortcomings were so prevalent that TerraChoice separated them into six categories – or the “Six Sins of Greenwashing.”

1. **Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off:** e.g. “Energy-efficient” electronics that contain hazardous materials. 998 products or 57% of all environmental claims committed this Sin.
2. **Sin of No Proof:** e.g. Shampoos claiming to be “certified organic,” but with no verifiable certification. 454 products and 26% of environmental claims committed this Sin.
3. **Sin of Vagueness:** e.g. Products claiming to be 100% natural when many naturally-occurring substances are hazardous, like arsenic and formaldehyde. Seen in 196 products or 11% of environmental claims.
4. **Sin of Irrelevance:** e.g. Products claiming to be CFC-free, even though CFCs were banned 20 years ago. This Sin was seen in 78 products and 4% of environmental claims.
5. **Sin of Fibbing:** e.g. Products falsely claiming to be certified by an internationally recognized environmental standard like EcoLogo, Energy Star or Green Seal. Found in 10 products or less than 1% of environmental claims.
6. **Sin of Lesser of Two Evils:** Organic cigarettes or a hybrid-yet-inefficient SUV. This occurred in 17 products or 1% of environmental claims.

“Consumers are inundated with products that make green claims,” says McDougall. “Some are accurate, certified and verifiable, while others are just plain fibbing to sell products.”

Manufacturers and suppliers can request an assessment and EcoLogo certification in order to determine whether a product’s claims are valid or if they commit one of the Six Sins. EcoLogo’s insignia will help consumers know that an independent, credible and expert third party has verified a product’s green qualifications.

“Consumers want to live a more environmentally sustainable lifestyle,” points out McDougall. “TerraChoice’s goal with the *Six Sins of Greenwashing* is to help consumers become more knowledgeable shoppers so that they can buy green with confidence.”

About EcoLogo

EcoLogo is a government ecolabelling program that has been accredited by the Global Ecolabelling Network, an international association of ecolabelling programs, as meeting the ISO 14024 environmental marketing standard. EcoLogo provides a market incentive to manufacturers and suppliers of environmentally preferable products and services in more than 120 product categories (more than 7,000 products currently certified), and thereby helps consumers identify products and services that are less harmful to the environment. EcoLogo was established in 1988 and today is one of the most recognizable ecolabelling initiatives in North America. For more information, visit www.ecologo.org.

About TerraChoice Environmental Marketing

TerraChoice Environmental Marketing is North America’s premiere environmental marketing firm. TerraChoice has been the official management, certification and delivery agent of the EcoLogo since 1995. Emphasis on customer service is a key component of TerraChoice’s delivery of the EcoLogo. Companies going through the certification process are assisted at every stage. In the final stages, applicants are visited by a third-party auditor who conducts a final verification audit. For more information, visit www.terrachoice.com.

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To download a copy of the *Six Sins of Greenwashing* Report, go to www.terrachoice.com and click on the “Six Sins of Greenwashing”.

To see video of Scott McDougall talking about the Six Sins of Greenwashing, go to <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkIJtU67Rc8>

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