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November 14, 2005

Robert A. Iger, Chief Executive Officer
The Walt Disney Company
500 South Buena Vista Street
Burbank, CA 90038

Dear Mr. Iger:

We the undersigned Attorneys General write to request that the Walt Disney Company demonstrate a commitment to protect the health of our nation's youth by inserting an anti-smoking public service announcement on all DVD, video, and other newer home viewing format movies (such as "Universal Media Discs" or "UMD's") distributed by your studio in which smoking is depicted. Recent events underscore the need and present an opportunity for such action on your part now.

More than two years ago, we first raised our concerns with the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) about tobacco brand appearances and the mounting scientific proof that young people who watch smoking in movies are more likely to begin smoking, even after controlling for other known smoking risk factors such as smoking by friends. When several of us met with Bruce Hendricks, President, Motion Picture Production of Walt Disney Pictures, and other MPAA company executives in Los Angeles in December 2003, Dr. Madeline Dalton presented the findings of her Dartmouth Medical School research team that children ages 10-14 who watched popular movies with the greatest number of smoking depictions were almost three (2.71) times more likely to start smoking than their peers who watched movies with the fewest smoking depictions.¹ While acknowledging that the study examined children from only Vermont and New Hampshire, Dr. Dalton reviewed the compelling evidence that viewing smoking in movies promotes smoking initiation among adolescents.

¹Dalton, M.A., Sargent, J.D., et al., Effect of viewing smoking in movies on adolescent smoking initiation: a cohort study. *Lancet* 2003; 362 (9380): 281-285.

Now, with the November 7, 2005 publication of confirming results from a nationally representative study, any notion that the earlier findings reflected merely a regional effect has been dispelled. Funded by the National Cancer Institute, this latest study of 6522 children by the Dartmouth researchers establishes that the strong, direct relationship between exposure to smoking depictions in movies and youth smoking initiation applies to all children in the United States – regardless of race, ethnicity or region of the country. Sargent, J.D., et al., *Exposure to Movie Smoking: Its Relation to Smoking Initiation Among U.S. Adolescents*, *Pediatrics* 2005; 116: 1183-1191. (available at <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/>). After controlling for all other known smoking risk factors (socio-demographics, friend/sibling/parent smoking, school performance, personality characteristics, and parenting style), the children in the national study who watched popular movies with the greatest number of smoking depictions, just like their regional study counterparts, were almost three (2.6) times more likely to start smoking than their peers who had viewed the fewest smoking depictions in movies. In the words of the researchers,

[T]his study demonstrates, in a nationally representative U.S. sample of young adolescents, that exposure to movie smoking has a strong association with smoking initiation and that the association holds within broad racial and ethnic categories and regardless of where the adolescent resides. Our study suggests that exposure to movie smoking is a primary independent risk factor, accounting for smoking initiation among over one-third of U.S. adolescents age 10-14 years of age, and provides additional scientific support for public health programs aimed at reducing adolescent exposure to movie smoking.

Thus, the study confirms that movies are prompting initiation of smoking in hundreds of thousands of U.S. adolescents each year. We believe the time is now for the movie industry to take action on this issue.

As we previously have urged the movie industry in our letters, meetings, and May 2004 testimony before the United States Senate, eliminating brand appearances and reducing youth exposure to smoking depictions in movies represent a direct and responsible approach to reducing the resulting risk of youth smoking initiation.² At the same time, there is strong

²As Dr. Dalton explained at our December 2003 meeting, leading medical and public health organizations (including the World Health Organization, American Medical Association, American Academy of Pediatrics, American Legacy Foundation, Society for Adolescent Medicine, American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology, American Heart Association and U.S. Public Interest Research Group) endorse four recommendations developed by the SmokeFreeMovies Project to prevent

The Walt Disney Company

November 18, 2005

Page 3

evidence that airing anti-smoking messages lessens the effects on youth of viewing depictions of smoking in movies.³ As you may be aware, the American Legacy Foundation, in partnership with the Entertainment Industry Foundation and the Will Rogers Institute, is producing an anti-smoking public service announcement (PSA) to be aired in theaters across this country. You can dramatically increase the number of young people who will receive that anti-smoking message by attaching it to DVD, video and other newer home viewing format movies (such as UMD's) that depict smoking that you distribute. We understand that this PSA currently is in production and should be available in January 2006. We are certain that the American Legacy Foundation and its partners will make this and other future appropriate PSA's available to you. Accordingly, we urge you to join the efforts to prevent the deadly consequences of youth smoking and to demonstrate a commitment to this cause by including the Legacy anti-smoking PSA on all DVD, video and UMD movies depicting smoking distributed by your company.

We look forward to your favorable response. Please identify a person in your organization who will serve as the contact on this matter. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Special Assistant to the Maryland Attorney General Marlene Trestman at 410-576-7219 (mtrestman@oag.state.md.us).

Very truly yours,



Attorney General J. Joseph Curran, Jr.
Attorney General of Maryland

youth smoking initiation from depictions of smoking in movies: 1) give movies with smoking an R-rating, except when the presentation of tobacco clearly reflects the consequences of tobacco use or is necessary to accurately represent an historical figure; 2) eliminate tobacco brand identification; 3) certify that no consideration was received for depicting smoking in the movie; and 4) run effective anti-smoking messages (not produced by a tobacco company) before any movie that depicts smoking.

³Pechmann, C. and Shih, C.F., Smoking Scenes in Movies and Anti-smoking Advertisements Before Movies: Effects on Youth. *Journal of Marketing*, 1999. 63: pp. 1-13.



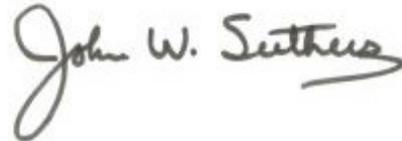
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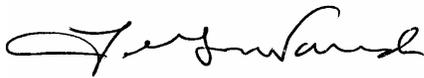
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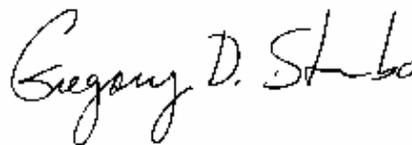
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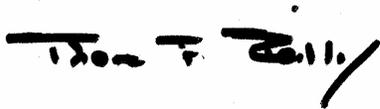
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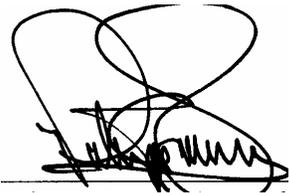
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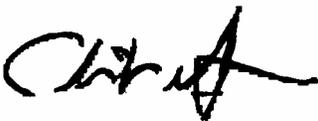
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The Walt Disney Company

November 14, 2005

Page 6



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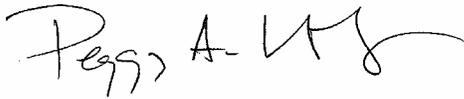
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