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**Leading Retailers Pledge Their Gold Jewelry Will Sparkle Responsibly**  
*Birks & Mayors, QVC, Wal-Mart and Others Support Cleaner Gold Mining;*  
*Target named a laggard*

Washington, DC – This Valentine’s season, 11 jewelry retailers are announcing their support for the No Dirty Gold campaign’s Golden Rules criteria for more socially and environmentally responsible mining, bringing the total number of jewelry retailers supporting the Golden Rules up to 19. The list includes 7 of the 10 largest U.S. retailers of jewelry, and represents about 22 percent of the country’s total jewelry market. The companies added to the list this year are: Birks & Mayors, Fred Meyer and Littman Jewelers, Ben Bridge Jeweler, Wal-Mart, QVC, Commemorative Brands (parent company of Balfour, ArtCarved, and Keystone class rings brands), Brilliant Earth, Leber Jeweler, TurningPoint, Boscov’s and Michaels Jewelers.

“We know our customers expect their jewelry to sparkle without the taint of dirty gold,” said Thomas A. Andruskevich, President and CEO of Birks & Mayors. “We believe it is our responsibility, as the premier jewelry retailer in Southeastern United States, to take the lead in the effort to ensure that gold is mined with socially and environmentally responsible methods.”

Birks & Mayors operates 29 luxury jewelry stores across Florida and Georgia under the Mayors brand and 38 stores across Canada under the Birks brand. The company posted annual sales of \$274.3 million in 2005. Birks’ long history operating in Canada motivated the company to sign the Golden Rules in part to support efforts to protect the ecological and cultural integrity of the Canadian Boreal Forest which is at risk from mining.

“By signing onto the Golden Rules, these jewelry retailers have burnished their reputations as industry leaders. Customers in Paris and mining-affected communities in Peru alike will take note of their support for improved mining practices,” said Payal Sampat of environmental organization EARTHWORKS and co-director of the No Dirty Gold campaign. More than 55,000 consumers worldwide have signed a pledge calling on jewelers and mining companies to provide an alternative to “dirty” gold.

“The message from the jewelry industry is clear—there is an emerging consensus that “dirty” gold will not be tolerated,” said Raymond C. Offenheiser, president of Oxfam America, an international relief and development organization and co-founder of the No Dirty Gold campaign.

The campaign also added the Target Corporation, the Minnesota-based retailer, to its laggards list. Target has fallen behind these industry leaders by not making the same commitments, despite the campaign’s repeated efforts to win the company’s support. No Dirty Gold activists across the country are calling Target stores to lobby the company on its gold sourcing policy. Many are also hosting house parties to send hand-made Valentines to Target CEO Robert Ulrich, urging him to demonstrate the company’s commitment to communities and the environment by signing on to the Golden Rules.

“Unfortunately, Target is still off the mark,” said Offenheiser. “We urge Target to join industry leaders in formally committing to the human rights and environmental criteria outlined in the Golden Rules.”

Last year, eight companies endorsed the Golden Rules on Valentine’s Day, one of the biggest jewelry-buying holidays in the United States. These companies are: Zale Corp., the Signet Group (the parent firm of Sterling and Kay Jewelers), Tiffany & Co., Helzberg Diamonds, Fortunoff, Cartier, Piaget, and Van Cleef & Arpels.

More than 80 percent of the gold in the U.S. is used to make jewelry. Retail sales of jewelry in the U.S. were an estimated \$55 billion in 2005, of which gold jewelry accounted for nearly \$18 billion, or one-third of the total. The 19 companies together represent about \$12 billion in retail jewelry sales, or 22 percent of total jewelry sales in the United States, which is second only to India in annual gold consumption.

The jewelry sector’s increased awareness of mining’s impacts has spurred the creation of a multi-stakeholder group of retailers, mining companies, and NGOs called the Initiative for Responsible Mining (IRMA). IRMA will seek to establish best practice standards for mining operations, as well as a system to independently verify compliance with those standards.

The production of a single gold ring generates, on average, 20 tons of waste. Gold mining has caused massive environmental destruction, contaminated fisheries and fresh water, and displaced tens of thousands of communities around the world. Approximately half the gold produced worldwide between 1995 and 2015 has or will come from indigenous peoples' lands. For more information, please visit [www.nodirtygold.org](http://www.nodirtygold.org).

*For interviews with No Dirty Gold campaign and jewelry sector spokespeople, or for more information, please contact: Harlin Savage, Resource Media, (720) 564-0500, ext. 11, email: [harlin@resource-media.org](mailto:harlin@resource-media.org) or Helen DaSilva, Oxfam America, (617) 331-2984, email: [hdasilva@oxfamamerica.org](mailto:hdasilva@oxfamamerica.org).*

*Note: Statements in this press release from retailers are provided for the information of journalists and do not imply endorsement of the entire release by the individuals quoted therein.*

#### **Top 10 U.S. Jewelry Retailers (by sales)\***

| <b>Company</b>      | <b>U.S. Jewelry Sales<br/>(in millions), 2005</b> |
|---------------------|---|
| Wal-Mart            | \$2700  |
| Sterling            | \$2309  |
| Zale Corp           | \$2178  |
| QVC                 | \$1400  |
| Tiffany & Co        | \$1220  |
| JC Penney           | \$1200  |
| Sears Roebuck & Co  | \$1050  |
| Finlay Fine Jewelry | \$990   |
| Helzberg Diamonds   | \$520   |
| Fred Meyer Jewelers | \$455   |

\* Sterling figure does not include \$845.5 million in UK sales, and Zale Corp figure does not include \$204.9 million in Canadian sales.