

**Debra Hare-Bey, CEO Oh My Heavenly Hair,
Licensed Cosmetologist, Master Braider and EVP
Board of Director Natural Hairstyle and Braid
Coalition**

What I Support and What I Disagree With:

I support the use of clean, safe, plant-based products that prioritize the health and wellness of consumers. I am strongly in favor of restricting intentionally added formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing agents in cosmetic and personal care products. I disagree with the continued allowance of ingredients that are known to be harmful—particularly those linked to cancer, hormone disruption, and skin or respiratory damage. Cosmetic products should never contain carcinogenic or hormone-disrupting ingredients, especially those marketed toward women and children.

Suggested Language:

I recommend using specific language that emphasizes safety and transparency, such as:

- “Formulated with plant-based, botanical ingredients that nourish the scalp, skin, and hair.”
- “Free from carcinogens, endocrine disruptors, and harmful preservatives.”

- “Tested for safety to support holistic wellness and long-term health.”

Examples and Concerns:

A major concern is the widespread use of synthetic ingredients in products that target vulnerable communities. For example, synthetic hair used for braiding often contains known carcinogens such as formaldehyde and other toxic chemicals. These ingredients are not only absorbed through the skin but also inhaled during wear and styling.

Another example includes preservatives like DMDM Hydantoin, which release formaldehyde over time and are still found in some shampoos, conditioners, and styling products. These pose significant risks, particularly for long-term users.

Supplemental Information:

Numerous studies and regulatory bodies—including the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the Environmental Working Group (EWG), and the Campaign for Safe Cosmetics—have flagged many commonly used cosmetic ingredients as unsafe. Research has shown that prolonged exposure to toxic chemicals in cosmetics is linked to higher rates of hormone-related cancers, autoimmune disorders, and reproductive harm,

especially among women of color who use these products more frequently.

Sales data shows a growing consumer demand for clean beauty, with the global clean beauty market expected to reach \$22 billion by 2024. Brands that lead in transparency and safety are not only protecting consumers but also gaining long-term loyalty and market advantage.

Suggested Solutions:

- Implement stricter testing and safety standards for all cosmetic and personal care products.
- Prohibit the use of ingredients that are proven to cause cancer, disrupt hormones, or damage the skin and respiratory system.
- Require clear, easy-to-understand labeling for any potentially harmful ingredients.
- Mandate warning labels for ingredients linked to endocrine disruption and cancer.
- Provide funding and incentives for research and development of safe, plant-based alternatives.
- Include feedback from community-based wellness professionals and small brands already leading in clean, natural beauty.

