



## Transformers Foundation Releases Investigative Report on The Fashion Industry's Chemical Certification Complex

*"Fashion's Certification Complex: Needlessly Complicated, Woefully Ineffective" equips fashion professionals with the actions they can take to reform chemical management in the fashion industry*

NEW YORK | November 8, 2022 | Transformers Foundation, a non-profit organisation that provides denim suppliers with a platform to share their expertise and opinion on industry threats and solutions, announced the publication of "Fashion's Certification Complex: Needlessly Complicated, Woefully Ineffective," an investigative report on how fashion's chemical auditing is failing us and what actions industry and policy can make to fix it, authored by Alden Wicker.

Dozens of private-sector auditors, consultancies, labs, and certifications provide an expensive and inefficient form of surveillance over the supply chain on behalf of brands.

Many of these organisations offer almost identical services, and yet the supply chain must adopt all of them, and front the cost. Many brands and retailers have even created their own suite of restricted substance lists (RSLs) and testing protocol on top of the third-party auditing they require. While brands and retailers use chemical management as a differentiator, a marketing tool, and a way to shirk responsibility, it is the supply chain—from the chemical companies to the denim laundries—that pays for testing, certification, and management of these overlapping safety protocols. That is capital that suppliers often do not have, and this penny-pinching from brands can lead to cut corners.

This system puts consumers and garment workers at risk—consumer advocacy groups continue to test clothes and accessories and find heavy metals, hormone disrupting chemicals, carcinogens, and banned azo dyes.

What's more, the science of textile toxicology is under-researched. There is uncertainty about how many types of chemicals are currently used in the fashion industry or global commerce. There is significant debate around which chemicals are hazardous, how much of a hazardous chemical can be present on a fashion product, routes of exposure, the accuracy of testing methods, and more. Legislation on consumer product chemical safety, which could align and enforce standards, has been uneven and in most cases inadequate.

Many large brands have joined ZDHC, the industry group dedicated to ensuring factory effluent is free of hazardous chemicals. While this has aligned some of the fashion industry around safer standards, there still is not enough alignment around a single set of rules and chemical management remains largely voluntary. Far from stamping out the use of contamination and banned chemicals and dyes, certification and auditing schemes are expensive, hard to scale up, and easily circumvented by those who wish to cut corners.

Though private certification and testing schemes may not have delivered, we can build on them to make a more efficient, more innovative, fairer, and more effective global chemical management program. It is possible to make fashion products safe—for everyone. But to do so, brands, governments, and chemical suppliers must collaborate and align on a single set of standards as outlined in Transformers Foundation's report.



The report is organised into the following sections:

- Opening Remarks and Methodology
- Competition Over Collaboration
- Regulatory Gaps
- Calls To Action

Find Transformers Foundation's vision for a new future, and their calls to action in their latest report, and register for the two webinars to dive deeper into the report's subject matter.

**November 10th @ 9am ET / 3pm CET:**

Fashion's Certification Complex: Needlessly Complicated, Woefully Ineffective

[Register Here](#)

**November 29th @ 9am ET / 3pm CET:**

A Certified Failure: How to Get Beyond Chemical, Social, and Material Certifications

[Register Here](#)

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**About Transformers Foundation**

Transformers Foundation is the unified voice representing the denim industry and its ideas for positive change. It was founded to provide a thus-far missing platform to the jeans and denim supply chain and a central point of contact for consumers, brands, NGOs, and media who want to learn more about ethics and sustainable innovation in the industry.

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