

# COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

## Canadian Retailers and Video Gaming Industry Launch National Ratings Education and Enforcement Program

**Toronto, October 14, 2004** – Canadian retailers and the computer and video game industry today announced the launch of a new countrywide “Commitment to Parents” initiative beginning this holiday season to help parents ensure the games they buy for their children are appropriate for their households.

*Commitment to Parents* is an industry-led voluntary initiative designed to limit the sale or rental of games to children that are meant for older teenagers and adults. It achieves this through a combination of educating consumers about the video game rating system and point-of-purchase controls.

Today’s announcement was made by Retail Council of Canada (RCC), the Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESA Canada) and the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) at news conferences in Winnipeg, Halifax and Toronto. The program has been in operation in British Columbia since 2001.

Participating retailers have agreed not to sell or rent “M”- rated (Mature) games to customers under the age of 17, or games rated “AO” (Adults Only) to customers under the age of 18. These retailers are also displaying store signs which advise customers of their participation in the program and promote awareness and understanding of the ESRB rating system.

“This initiative is an extension of retailers’ commitment to customer service,” said Diane J. Brisebois, President and CEO of Retail Council of Canada. “When parents enter a participating retail store they can feel confident that the retailer is working on their behalf to ensure the video games their children buy or rent are suitable for their age.”

*Commitment to Parents* participating retailers to date include: Hudson’s Bay Company retail outlets the Bay and Zellers, Best Buy, Blockbuster Canada, EB Games, Future Shop, RadioShack, Rogers Video, Toys ‘R’ Us, and Wal-Mart.



# COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

...2/

The program is supported by the *Commitment to Parents National Retailer Code* which was developed in consultation with several Canadian provinces and outlines the participating retailers' responsibilities, a consumer redress process, and a provision for provincial Video Games Advisory Committees.

"The ESRB rating system gives parents and consumers throughout Canada the tools they need to make informed purchase decisions and bring home appropriate games for their families. The initiatives presented today will make a real difference in helping consumers to better understand and more consistently use ESRB ratings, and, in the end, ensure that the right games end up in the right hands," said Patricia Vance, President of the Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB). "We look forward to continuing to work with the provincial governments, Retail Council of Canada and its member retailers on this exciting and important effort."

Doug Taylor, president of the Entertainment Software Association – Canada added,

"The effort announced today reflects an important commitment by the interactive entertainment industry, our retail partners, the ESRB, and provincial governments to parents and other consumers of computer and video games. Through ratings education and enforcement of the *Commitment To Parents Code*, we can all be assured that parents will have the information and support to decide which games are appropriate for their unique families,"

Program partners are launching a public awareness campaign for the 2004 Christmas shopping season, which will continue into 2005, to educate and inform parents about the rating system. The campaign includes public service announcements, point-of-purchase signage, store associate training and a Consumer On-line Hotline. The *Commitment to Parents National Retailer Code* can be viewed at [www.retailcouncil.org](http://www.retailcouncil.org), and more information on the ESRB is available at [www.esrb.org](http://www.esrb.org).

-30-



# COMMITMENT TO PARENTS

## About RCC

Retail Council of Canada ([www.retailcouncil.org](http://www.retailcouncil.org)) is the Voice of Retail. It is a not-for-profit association whose more than 9,000 members represent all retail formats, including national and regional department stores, mass merchants, specialty chains, independent stores and online merchants.

## About ESRB

The Entertainment Software Rating Board (ESRB) is a self-regulatory body established in 1994 by the Entertainment Software Association, the U.S. trade association for the interactive entertainment software industry. ESRB independently applies and enforces ratings, advertising guidelines, and online privacy principles adopted by the industry.

## About ESA Canada

The Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESA Canada) is the association exclusively dedicated to serving the business and public affairs needs of companies in Canada that publish video and computer games for video game consoles, personal computers, and the Internet.

## For more information, contact:

ESRB and ESA Canada: Joe Wagner (202) 572-2979

RCC: David Day, Pipeline Communications (416) 694-2777 ext 222

