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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515-6115

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October 30, 2007

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Ms. Elizabeth Bush
President
GeoCentral
3210 California Blvd
Napa, CA 94558

Dear Ms. Bush:

We are writing with reference to your letter of September 4, 2007, responding to a series of questions that we posed regarding Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) recalls affecting some of your company's products. While most of the information provided by you and other respondents was complete and very helpful, in some instances answers were incomplete and therefore we are transmitting further requests for clarification about certain questions.

As you may know, on May 15, 2007, the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection held an oversight hearing on the performance of the CPSC in safeguarding consumers, especially children, from hazardous products. On June 6, 2007, the Subcommittee held a hearing on four child safety bills that subsequently passed the House by voice vote. That package included legislation to improve consumer notification of recalls and to raise the cap on civil penalties. The Subcommittee held two days of comprehensive hearings on September 19 and 20, 2007, on how to address the problem of lead-tainted children's products. We are now working to craft balanced, bipartisan legislation that will enhance the protection of consumers, especially children, from hazardous products and to reform the operations of the CPSC. Your input is an important part of this process.

Accordingly, we request that you respond to these follow-up questions by the close of business on Tuesday, November 6, 2007. Your written responses should be delivered to room 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 and faxed to 202-226-5577 to the attention of Ms. Valerie Baron. An electronic version of your response should also be sent by e-mail to Ms. Baron at valerie.baron@mail.house.gov in a single document.

1. In your September 4, 2007, letter to the Committee, you supplied an average level of lead detected in recalled products in response to Committee question number 2. Please provide specific information detailing the exact amount of lead detected in

- each of the recalled products tested. Provide all supporting documents, including test results.**
2. Please elaborate upon your response in your September 4, 2007, letter to question number 4. Provide a detailed account of the provisions in your agreements with the Chinese and other manufacturers banning the use of lead and lead paint or limiting its use to lawful safety standards in the manufacture of the products your company imports. Include a copy of a typical agreement GeoCentral uses.
 3. In your September 4, 2007, letter, you state that “vendors are required to provide compliance certification for children’s items that include metal or painted components to ensure products do not exceed lawful safety standards.” Please explain, in detail, the certification required by your agreements. Specifically, what tests, if any, must products undergo before they are eligible for certification? Are certification facilities located in the United States or abroad? What organization, if any, grants accreditation for such certification facilities?
 4. According to your September 4, 2007, letter, the CPSC discovered that your products contained excessive amounts of lead. Were these products subject to your certification process? If so, did GeoCentral’s certification process also discover the excessive lead? If not, please explain to the best of your knowledge the reason your company’s compliance process failed to discover the excessive lead and prevent it from reaching consumers.
 5. Since the recall of this past summer, have you made changes to any contracts with vendors or manufacturers regarding requirements for compliance with U.S. product safety standards, including lead limits? If so, please provide details in describing these changes. Additionally, please detail how you monitor compliance with these standards.

Thank you for your cooperation and attention to our request. We look forward to reviewing your responses, and wish to emphasize that we require complete responses to each question. If you need further information, please contact Judith Bailey or Andrew Woelfling with the Committee Majority staff at (202) 225-2927 or Brian McCullough or Shannon Weinberg with the Committee Minority staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Bobby L. Rush
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade,
and Consumer Protection



Cliff Stearns
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade,
and Consumer Protection

Ms. Elizabeth Bush
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cc: The Honorable John D. Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce

The Honorable Joe Barton, Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce