

Energy and Commerce Subcommittee Draws Stakeholder Reactions to Proposed Consumer Protection Legislation

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NEWS RELEASE

Committee on Energy and Commerce

Rep. John D. Dingell, Chairman

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Washington, D.C. — The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection today held a hearing on its comprehensive consumer protection and Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reform bill.

Last week, H.R. 4040, the Consumer Product Safety Modernization Act of 2007, was introduced by Reps. John D. Dingell (D-MI), Chairman of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; Joe Barton (R-TX), Ranking Member of the Committee on Energy and Commerce; Bobby Rush (D-IL), Chairman of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer protection; and Cliff Stearns (R-FL), Ranking Member of the Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection and a bipartisan group of 46 original cosponsors. The bill establishes an outline for improving and reforming the nation's consumer product safety system with provisions that include increased funds and staffing for the CPSC, a nationwide ban on products containing lead beyond a trace amount, third-party testing and certification for children's products, and mandatory tracking labels for children's products.

"As has been established in the hearing records by this Subcommittee, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is hampered both in lack of authority and in resources to address crucial consumer protection issues faced by our citizens," said Dingell. "I believe that H.R. 4040 will go far to alleviate these problems, as well as strengthen the CPSC to meet the responsibilities under its jurisdiction. I remain committed to ensuring that the Committee on Energy and Commerce produces a thoughtful, well-intentioned, and effective bill that will make crucial improvements in the CPSC to strengthen its ability to protect our Nation's consumers."

"On May 15 of this year—before the numerous, high-profile, summer recalls of millions of lead-tainted toys—this subcommittee held its first hearing on children's safety and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC)," said Rush. "At the conclusion of that May hearing, I publicly made a pledge, as Chairman of the subcommittee of jurisdiction, to revitalize the beleaguered Commission by authorizing more resources and reforming the underlying, organic statute. I also pledged to do so in a bipartisan manner. The bill that is the subject of our legislative hearing today is the product of that pledge I made almost six months ago."

Dr. Dana Best, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.A.P., testified on behalf of the American Academy of Pediatrics at the hearing about the dangers of ingesting lead. "The Academy commends the bill's authors for establishing a single standard for lead in all children's products, rather than attempting to establish different classes of products with varying standards. It is critically important that all children's products be held to the same aggressive standards to protect children's health and assure parents that all children's products are safe," she said.

The proposed legislation is the product of several months of research and investigations conducted by the committee into the recent widespread findings of lead in children's products imported from China, as well as the nation's system for recalling defective or tainted products. In August 2007, the Committee sent letters to 19 retailers and importers requesting information on their findings of lead. On September 19 and 20, the Committee held a hearing on lead in children's products and the resulting recalls.

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Prepared by the Committee on Energy and Commerce

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