

ONE HUNDRED FOURTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927
Minority (202) 225-3641

March 8, 2016

Georg Richter
President and Chief Operating Officer
Guthy-Renker, LLC
3340 Ocean Park Boulevard #3055
Santa Monica, CA 90405

Dear Mr. Richter:

I write to you to express my concern over the ongoing safety issues related to the use of Guthy-Renker LLC's hair care product, WEN Cleansing Conditioner, and request that Guthy-Renker provide further information verifying the safety of the WEN Cleansing Conditioner.

It has come to my attention that more than 17,000 consumers have filed complaints with Guthy-Renker as a result of hair loss associated with the use of WEN Cleansing Conditioner. Complaints filed by countless customers on product forums, retail web sites, and consumer sites detail a number of adverse events related to the use of the product, including significant hair loss, visible bald spots, hair breakage, scalp irritation, rash, and burning of the scalps and eyes, among other complaints. According to court documents, one consumer began losing "substantial and abnormal amounts of hair" within the first two weeks of using WEN Cleansing Conditioner.¹ Despite discontinuing use, hair loss continued for nearly three weeks, ultimately resulting in the loss of up to one third of the consumer's hair.² It is further concerning that consumer complaints related to hair loss or hair breakage associated with the use of WEN Cleansing Conditions date as far back as late 2008.³

¹ First Amended Complaint, *Friedman v. Guthy-Renker LLC*, Case No. 2:14-cv-06009-ODW-AGR (C.D. Cal. Nov. 23, 2014).

² *Id.*

³ Minutes in Chambers granting in part and denying in part Plaintiff's Motion to Compel Further Responses to Document Requests, *Friedman v. Guthy-Renker LLC*, Case No. 2:14-cv-06009-ODW-AGR (C.D. Cal. Aug. 24, 2015).

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Despite long-standing knowledge of safety issues related to the use of WEN products, and thousands of consumer complaints, Guthy-Renker continues to deny safety issues associated with use of WEN hair care products: "There is no scientific evidence to support any claim that our hair care products caused anyone to lose their hair. There are many reasons why individuals may lose their hair, all unrelated to Wen hair products."⁴ Further, Guthy-Renker has stated that the company intends to contest the allegations made against WEN hair care products.

Given the increasing number of consumers experiencing adverse events related to the use of your products, I respectfully request a briefing as soon as possible from the appropriate staff at Guthy-Renker to discuss the safety issues associated with WEN products. In addition, I would also request that in advance of this briefing you provide the following documents:

1. All assessments commissioned to determine whether the WEN Cleansing Conditioner causes hair loss or hair breakage.
2. All documents related to the testing of the WEN Cleansing Conditioner for purposes of demonstrating safety, effectiveness, potential side effects, or allergic reactions.
3. A detailed timeline of all interactions and communications between Guthy-Renker and FDA relating or referring to potential side effects or safety issues associated with the use of WEN hair care products.
4. All communications to or from FDA regarding consumer complaints of hair loss or hair breakage, including a copy of Guthy-Renker's February 18, 2014, letter to FDA detailing the assessments related to the hair loss investigation, the findings, and conclusions.
5. All communications to or from Guthy-Renker relating or referring to potential side effects potential side effects or safety issues associated with the use of WEN products, including any safety communications to consumers and/or hair care professionals.
6. A copy of the labeling for WEN Cleansing Conditioner, including any safety warnings that accompany the product.
7. All reports, if any, submitted to MedWatch detailing adverse events associated with the use of WEN hair care products.

⁴ *Popular Hair Product Line Wen Sued for Allegedly Making Women Go Bald*. NBC News (Dec 15, 2015) (online at <http://www.nbcnews.com/business/business-news/popular-hair-product-line-wen-sued-allegedly-making-women-go-n480276>).

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I ask that you provide this briefing and related documents no later than March 25, 2016. If you should have any further questions, please contact Kimberlee Trzeciak of my staff at (202) 225-3641.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Ranking Member