

CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION (CPSC) LEAD ISSUE UPDATE

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF) has learned that the Consumer Product Safety Commission Improvement Act (CPSCIA) received some attention in a House hearing recently. The Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection held a hearing titled, "Consumer Product Safety Commission Oversight: Current Issues and a Vision for the Future." The hearing had one invited witness, newly seated CPSC Chair Inez Tenenbaum. Tenenbaum touched on a lot of issues with the CPSCIA, including the issue of lead in youth motorcycles and ATVs. The bulk of Tenenbaum's remarks were focused on reform, the need for more resources and the Commission's work on the Chinese dry wall issue.

For those not familiar, the CPSCIA set allowable maximums of the lead content in items marketed to 13 year olds and younger. This was a knee jerk reaction to the high quantity in toys manufactured in China. What happened as a result of this action was an enormous storm of problems with everything from children's books to youth off-road dirt bike boots and helmets. Because of the arbitrary nature of this law, many items were banned as a result of its vagueness, an inactive Congress, and an understaffed CPSC. The CPSC did vote to issue a two-year stay of enforcement of the ban at the request of industry, but it is still technically illegal to sell the small vehicles. Tenenbaum takes the helm of the Commission at what is arguably worst time for the CPSC.

To address the specific concerns with lead in children's toys, with particular attention to youth ATVs and motorcycles, the CPSC is holding a summit at the end of October in trips paid for by toy manufacturers. We hope that the summit will produce reasonable, realistic rules for the sale of these youth products. There is legislation currently in Congress to overturn the ban of these sales. Denny Rehbert (R-MT) introduced HR 1587 earlier this year. Call your Congressperson and ask them to co-sponsor this bill.

OTHER CPSC NEWS

Former Congresswoman Annie Northrup (R-KY) represented Kentucky's 3rd District from 1997-2007 and served on the Appropriations Committee. She founded the House Reading Caucus and also drafted legislation that created the National Reading Panel, which helped determine which federally-funded reading programs were most effective. She was also a strong advocate for motorcyclist during her time in the House. Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell recently nominated her for the CPSC.

Lastly, not without controversy, a recent Washington Post story reported that employees at the CPSC accepted dozens of trips paid for by toy and children's furniture manufacturers that the agency regulates.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"I want to ride a Harley through downtown New Delhi!" Tim Roehmer, newly seated Ambassador to the Republic of India.