

**Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection
Hearing on H.R. 5820, the Toxic Chemicals Safety Act of 2010**

Oral Testimony of Howard Williams, Construction Specialties, Inc.

Thank you Chairman Rush, Representative Waxman and Members of the Subcommittee for inviting me to give our Company perspective on this matter.

I'm Howard Williams, V.P. & General Manager of the Pennsylvania division of Construction Specialties.

We're a small multi-national, privately owned, US Company with worldwide revenues of \$300MM and a staff of 1700.

We are headquartered in Lebanon, NJ and operate from 25 sites in 19 countries where we develop and manufacture architectural building products for nonresidential construction. (Office buildings, hospitals, schools, government buildings.) Our manufacturing facilities in central Pennsylvania have over 360 employees.

Domestic construction accounts for over 14% of our GDP, and HS 5820 has the potential to inform and support this powerful and profitable segment of our economy.

Chemicals and the elimination of PBTs from our built environment are at the forefront of materials purchasing and building standards for private and governmental programs.

Federal Environmentally Preferred Purchasing standards address PBTs, as do the LEED, green building standards under which our government buildings are constructed.

We interact with building materials and furnishings. We don't just enjoy the functional and aesthetic qualities of products; sometimes we breathe and absorb the PBTs off gassing from within the materials.

Globally, 78 million people are added to our planet each year, and, on average, 90% of all human activity takes place inside a building, and it is in this that we, as a company, act on our mission; Making Buildings Better.

We now seek to know the chemistry of our materials down to 100 ppm, or 99.99% of what's in each of our products. Knowing the chemicals in a product is the first step to determining whether the product contains a chemical of concern like PBTs or carcinogens.

Identifying the chemical composition of our products is a costly and time consuming process. It requires reaching through several layers within a supply chain and pulling forward information that is unknown at certain levels, and thought to be, or is, confidential

at other levels. It needlessly delays product development and places an indirect cost burden on the consumer.

There is a business case for doing what we're doing. We're fortunate to have the financial and social commitment to this form of product development and differentiation. From being able to act on our mission, to creating a strong competitive advantage in an ever increasing green building product market, we gain on several levels.

But the benefits to a population larger than we can ever reach will come only when Chemicals Policy Reform is enacted and access to chemical disclosure is commonplace.

Environmentally preferable and green building standards reward those whose materials have high amounts of recycled content. But the unintentional consequence is that PBTs will be recycled from one generation to another, and today's material composition will have lasting impacts on future generations.

Given the economic and population multipliers, coupled with America's global reach, H R 5820 becomes one of the more beneficially impactful pieces of legislation of our generation.

Minimum data sets become uniform templates for material selection at many levels within the design-to-commercialization process.

Prioritizing the safety determinations gives business a view into the future and allows early decisions while awaiting outcomes.

Disclosure to commercial purchasers sends essential information down the supply chain to the product developer.

Restricting the use of and exposure to chemicals of concern like PBTs, and promoting safer alternatives to them creates markets that are sustainable to businesses, consumers and the environment.

Our experience in trying to get ingredient information confirms that Disclosure is a highly charged issue, but worthy of the work required to reach a solution. Using a 3rd party intermediary was the only way we were able to learn whether a supplier's material met our requirements.

When will we find another time when people-centered environmentalism, consumerism and business interests are so well aligned?

It's a time for innovation and product development.

And a time for domestic and international business growth.

Meeting customer's needs and acting upon society's higher values has always been rewarded, and in today's terms that's a \$10 billion annual reward.

Our economy and our health are inextricably joined, and fundamental to a strong America.

Cancer, Parkinson's, Leukemia, Autism, Alzheimer's, and Endometriosis are non-partisan, and without prejudice or respect of status, affiliation or age, kill, destroy lives and pose a constant threat.

Close one door and it seems these diseases will come in through another, but it's vitally important that we close doors as we find them open.

You, through TSCA Reform, and we, through responsible product development and delivery, have an opportunity to close this door.

Let's join with others and close this door.

Thank you.