

U.S. House Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government  
2000 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

May 23, 2018

Dear Representative,

As organizations working to enhance product safety and prevent needless deaths and injuries, we strongly urge you and your colleagues on the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Financial Services and General Government to significantly increase funding for the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) in FY 2019 and to reject the inclusion of any policy riders that would undermine essential protections for consumers. The CPSC has a critical mission to protect the public from risks associated with consumer products, but its funding and staffing levels are insufficient to carry out the work necessary to fulfill this mission. The scope of work is enormous: for example, the CPSC reviews about 8,000 unintentional product-related death certificates each year, and is aware of at least 15.5 million emergency department-treated injuries per year associated with—if not necessarily caused by—consumer products.<sup>1</sup> In addition, the societal costs of consumer product incidents amount to more than \$1 trillion annually.<sup>2</sup> We urge you to significantly increase the CPSC’s funding above the FY 2018 enacted level of \$126 million.

Established by Congress in 1972, the CPSC is charged with protecting the public from hazards associated with over 15,000 different types of consumer products. Its statutes give the Commission the authority to set mandatory safety standards; participate in voluntary safety standards; require labeling; remove defective products from the shelves and order product recalls and other corrective actions when necessary; collect injury, death, and incident data; and educate the public about consumer product safety.

In 1974, the first full year that the CPSC was operating, Congress appropriated \$34.7 million, which would be about \$175 million in today’s dollars, accounting for inflation, and 786 FTEs to the agency. CPSC’s staffing levels rose to a high of 978 employees in 1980 before facing severe and repeated cuts during the 1980s. At the time of its FY 2019 budget request, the CPSC had 545 FTEs during the current fiscal year.

The consumer product market is changing rapidly, and the CPSC must be able to keep pace. If the CPSC is not adequately funded, it will not be able to protect consumers from either longstanding, well understood hazards, or those that are new or emerging.

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<sup>1</sup> U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, “2016 Annual Report to the President and Congress,” at 6 and 11, available online at [https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/CPSC\\_FY16\\_Annual\\_Report.pdf](https://www.cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/CPSC_FY16_Annual_Report.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, “Fiscal Year 2019 Performance Budget Request to Congress,” available online at <https://cpsc.gov/s3fs-public/FY2019PBR.pdf>.

In July 2008, the bipartisan Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) of 2008 overwhelmingly passed the House of Representatives by a vote of 424-1 and the Senate by a vote of 89-3. Section 201 of the CPSIA added a “General Authorization of Appropriations” to the CPSC’s original statute due to the critical importance of ensuring that the CPSC has the resources to fulfill its product safety mission. Under this language, codified at section 32 of the Consumer Product Safety Act (15 U.S.C. 2081), the appropriations level for the CPSC in 2014 was authorized to be \$136,409,000. Unfortunately, the FY 2018 level of \$126 million is \$10 million less than that authorization for the CPSC four years earlier. We are concerned that the CPSC’s FY 2019 Budget Request includes 538 FTEs, down from 552 in FY 2017. This proposed budget does not allow the CPSC to maintain its current workforce nor the workload needed to sufficiently protect the public.

Consumers depend on the CPSC to protect them from unsafe products. We urge you to provide the agency with significantly more funding and oppose efforts to limit, through policy riders, the CPSC’s authority or its activities supporting consumer safety.

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the CPSC receives sufficient funding to keep the public safe from product hazards and protect consumers from product-related deaths and injuries, many of which can be prevented.

Sincerely,

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