



NEWS FROM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 10, 2009

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**Statement by the Honorable Bobby L. Rush, Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection
for the hearing on
“The Consumer Product Safety Commission:
Current Issues and a Vision for the Future”**

September 10, 2009

WASHINGTON — “The Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (CPSIA) was one of the premiere accomplishments of the 110th Congress. The law created basic safety standards for keeping toxic lead and phthalates out of children’s products, gave the Consumer Product Safety Commission vital new resources and authority, and established a product testing system that will ensure product safety.

“I would like to welcome Chairman Inez Tenenbaum, who is the ninth Chairman of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. She hails from the great state of South Carolina. Chairman Tenenbaum is known nationally as an advocate for children and families; she served with distinction as the State of South Carolina’s Superintendent of Education for two terms.

“I am looking forward to seeing Chairman Tenenbaum steer the process of implementing the Act. Under her leadership, I believe that implementation will go more smoothly than under the previous Chair, and that the CPSC will more effectively utilize the increased resources that are now at its disposal. This is why I am so pleased to welcome Chairman Tenenbaum today, and to hear from her about the Commission’s new direction and its future vision.

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“It can now be said that the Chairman now has a full complement of Commissioners, something which it had lacked for too long under the previous Administration. President Obama has chosen well in nominating Robert S. Adler and Anne Northup. Commissioner Adler has deep agency experience as a former legal advisor to two CPSC commissioners, Commissioners Pittle and Zagoria. And, Commissioner Northup is a former Congresswoman from Kentucky’s Third District and mother of six, who served for nine years in the U. S. House of Representatives.

“As a Congresswoman, Commissioner Northup founded the House Reading Caucus and co-chaired the Congressional Coalition on Adoption, further showing her own personal commitment to helping and defending children.

“When you took the helm, Madam Chair, you showed courage, good sense, and a preference for rulemaking over eleventh hour stays. One of the first agenda items you scheduled was whether to exclude crystal and glass beads in children’s jewelry from the lead content restrictions in Section 101(a) of the CPSIA. You applied the facts as you found them to the CPSIA’s lead limits and to real world facts and foreseeable possibilities. For example, you talked and wrote about how children handle and play with this jewelry by mouthing, ingesting, and swallowing the beads, and how any amount of lead constituted too much lead in these beads.

“Your willingness to grapple with thorny issues and to visit some of our Pacific Rim trading partners who, today, manufacture as much as 85 percent of our toys, 95 percent of our fireworks and almost 60 percent of our electrical products shows leadership and vision. Unfortunately, more than 85 percent of our country’s recalled products are also imported.

“Chairman Tenenbaum, I will ask you questions based on remarks you have made in your public statements on some substantive areas that pose special safety and recall challenges and how you will go about implementing the CPSIA. I am also very interested in hearing about how you see the CPSC transitioning from the Nord era into the Tenenbaum era, with a shiny new product testing facility, more employees, and more appropriated dollars.

“As I close, I want you to comment, as extensively as you can, about the CPSC’s timelines for adopting new rules under CPSIA and some of the things that the GAO advised us was of concern or could be improved at the agency.

“I look forward to hearing your testimony. Thank you again so much for visiting with us today.”