

## **INVESTIGATION OF IMPORTED DRYWALL STATUS UPDATE, FEBRUARY 2010**

### **I. Overview**

This update describes new developments in the ongoing investigation of imported drywall and supplements the previous reports provided to the Committee. As of February 17, 2010, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (“Commission” or “CPSC”) had received 2941 incident reports related to drywall from 37 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. More than 90% of reports are from Florida (59%), Louisiana (21%), Mississippi (6%) and Alabama (5%) and Virginia (4%).

In addition to the consumer reports on drywall received by the CPSC, our outreach efforts and investigations have secured information from many other sources, including state governors, importers, builders, distributors, installers, and other parties in the drywall distribution chain. The Commission continues to synthesize this information in an effort to arrive at an informed estimate of homeowners potentially impacted by problem drywall.

On February 25-26, CPSC staff brought together all of our contractors and federal partners, including experts with different scientific backgrounds and areas of expertise, to consider the findings of all the studies conducted to date related to the corrosion associated with the drywall, and to discuss any potential health and fire-related implications for consumers. During the meetings, the group discussed how to use the existing data to provide important inputs to the ongoing studies relating to corrosion and the compliance investigation. In addition, the attendees considered potential approaches to address data gaps related to the health implications of exposure to low levels of chemical mixtures, and how to properly assess whether corroded electrical, HVAC, and fire safety components present a fire hazard.

A highlight of the meeting was preliminary chamber emissions testing data reported by the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBL). The preliminary LBL data showed that some Chinese drywall samples had significantly higher emission rates for hydrogen sulfide and other reduced sulfur gases compared to domestic samples and other imported samples. The CPSC, along with our interagency partners will review and finalize the results of LBL testing in the near future and release it to the public.

### **II. Federal, State and International Coordination**

CPSC and its partner agencies have continued to coordinate to further refine the January 29, 2010, identification guidance issued by CPSC and HUD, as well as to formulate preliminary remediation guidance which will be released by the end of April. CPSC has also been working with HUD to assist that agency in developing guidance for the use of local Community Development Block Grant program funds for the identification and remediation of problem drywall in homes. We continue to have frequent coordination meetings with our

agency partners and are working with the Council on Environmental Quality and the Domestic Policy Council.

### **III. Progress in the Investigation**

CPSC continues to investigate the chain of commerce of drywall, and to question firms in the U.S. and abroad about their drywall activities. CPSC staff closely monitors the developments of the Drywall Multi-District Litigation (MDL) and is in contact with the parties and the Special Master. CPSC also continues to investigate all reports of fire incidents related to drywall, but none have been confirmed to be related.

Analyses continue as planned and discussed in earlier reports. CPSC is committed to the release of all findings as quickly as possible, while maintaining scientific integrity. Contract work on analysis of samples is proceeding with Environmental Health and Engineering, Sandia National Laboratory, Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, the U.S. Geological Survey, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology.