



UNITED STATES
CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
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CHAIR ALEXANDER D. HOEHN-SARIC

Statement of Chair Alexander Hoehn-Saric on Passage of the Fiscal Year 2024 Operating Plan

November 8, 2023

Today, the Commission voted to approve an Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2024 that sets the path for the agency's work over the coming fiscal year.

As approved, the Plan will focus the agency on longstanding priorities to finalize mandatory standards for portable generators, table saws, furnaces, nursing pillows, infant and toddler rockers, and infant support cushions. We will also start essential work on new or updated standards for lithium-ion battery safety, water beads, infant water floats, and bassinets. And, under the Plan, we will keep tracking imports, testing products, gathering and analyzing data, and conducting the research that will inform our work in the future on ATVs, e-bikes, chronic hazards. We also will continue to educate and inform consumers on pool safety, safe sleep practices, button battery safety, and other subjects that empower consumers to protect themselves.

That is an ambitious list, particularly given the agency's budgetary limitations. The unfortunate, baseline assumption is that the CPSC will have our budget level cut by one percent, as outlined in the debt limit agreement struck by Congress this past summer. On its face, a one percent cut may not sound so bad. But as staff has laid out, due to expected salary increases and other costs we actually need at least \$10 million over last year's appropriation just to maintain our current level of activity. Put differently, a one percent cut results in an almost 20 percent cut to the non-salaried work of the Commission – from research to IT projects to laboratory equipment.

But that cut does not represent the worst-case scenario. The House of Representatives is voting this week on an appropriations bill that would set our budget back to the levels we had several years ago and will consider amendments to cut it further – by as much as half.

Should those deep cuts go into effect, it is the American people who will suffer and the unscrupulous businesses and importers who will benefit.

- Hazardous products that could have been stopped at our borders will end up on store shelves and in homes.
- Recalls will be dramatically slowed, almost to a crawl.

- And our work to prevent deaths and serious injuries from common children's and household products, and especially from hidden hazards, will be delayed or stopped.

I hope and expect that once these facts are made clear, CPSC's funding levels will remain steady, but we must be ready to operate under tighter budgetary constraints while keeping a focus on our mission to advance our safety work as expeditiously as possible.

While we Commissioners are the face of the agency, it is the staff who are the true heroes. Their day-to-day work drives the recalls, hazardous product seizures, safety standards, and safety messaging that save lives. I thank them for all that they do.

It is our responsibility to guide staff and prioritize our limited resources in order to succeed in getting the safety work of the American people done. The majority of my colleagues recognize that. And I'm pleased we were able to move this plan forward. It will have a real impact on consumer safety.