



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

**Statement of Chair Alexander Hoehn-Saric on Commission Approval of the Fiscal Year
2025 Operating Plan**

November 8, 2024

On November 6, 2024, the Commission unanimously approved an Operating Plan for Fiscal Year 2025. Staff drafted an aggressive and thoughtful plan while recognizing the tight fiscal environment that the Commission is facing.

Prior to the adoption of the plan, CPSC staff took steps over the last year to reduce our staffing levels and our spending to reflect reduced current funding and uncertain future appropriations:

- We are now operating with nine percent fewer staff than we were one year ago. And we are under a “critical hiring program” under which we are not necessarily replacing staff when they leave. We have unfilled positions across the agency that we cannot afford to fill;
- Across the board we have cut our rulemaking, research, engagement, enforcement, and consumer education budgets, limiting our impact and outreach on key safety issues; and
- We have dramatically cut back on staff travel and professional development. We have decreased office budgets across the agency.

Despite these cuts, in the last year staff worked diligently to achieve major victories for the American public by finalizing infant product safety rules, investigating and analyzing product defect incidents, working with companies to recall hundreds of dangerous products, stopping thousands of violative products at ports of entry, removing tens of thousands of violative product sold on eCommerce sites, educating consumers about product safety, training manufacturers on product safety requirements, and holding companies that violated the law accountable. I thank them for their dedication and commitment to CPSC’s mission.

In the context of the cuts that already were made in staff’s proposal, I am disappointed that a majority of my colleagues moved forward with an amendment that makes further dramatic cuts

to the CPSC's International Programs. The draft Operating Plan already had a bare-bones budget for our International Programs work. This amendment cut that even further, resulting in a 61 percent cut to International Programs.

I fear that, as a result of this amendment, our first line of defense for American consumers will be seriously impaired. Our Office of International Programs is the group at CPSC that trains foreign governments and foreign business on U.S. safety requirements. The best way to stop violative products from coming into this country is for CPSC to staff to educate manufacturers on U.S. standards and the consequences of failing to comply. Last year, thousands of companies in foreign countries participated in CPSC in-person and remote training programs. My colleagues' amendment will undermine future efforts.

Foreign companies that would have been trained on U.S. standards will likely produce more hazardous products. And those dangerous consumer products that we could have stopped at the source will end up in American homes.

In addition, the amendment put constraints on staff regarding in-person participation in voluntary standards activities. I have no doubt this will undermine CPSC's efforts to advance strong voluntary standards. Like international trainings, voluntary standards are a first line of protection that reduces the likelihood of hazardous products being made and coming to the U.S. Particularly at a time of short funding for CPSC, I do not understand the logic of cutting these programs and putting even greater strain on the agency to find hazardous products at the ports of entry, in stores, and online.

I urge all stakeholders to weigh in with the Commission regarding the impacts of this decision. Over the years, I have heard both consumer groups and industry praise the work of International Programs and the importance of active CPSC participation in voluntary standards work. I hope that when my colleagues hear from our stakeholders, they will choose to reverse their decision going forward so that we can resume these necessary operations.

Apart from the unnecessary and dramatic cut that my colleagues made to CPSC's international program today, I believe the Fiscal Year 2025 operating plan as presented by staff and approved by the Commission provides the agency with a solid, responsible plan given our budgetary constraints and uncertainty.

Once again, I thank CPSC staff for their continued focus on protecting consumer even in trying times. Your work saves lives, prevents injuries, and keeps families whole.

The views expressed in this statement are solely the views of Chair Hoehn-Saric and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Commission.