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Statement of Acting Chairman Peter A. Feldman on Granting the Child-Resistant Pool Ladder Petition and Renewing CPSC’s Focus on Drowning Prevention

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Drowning remains the leading cause of death for children ages one through four in the United States.

For too long, drowning prevention has not received the level of sustained attention this hazard demands. That is now changing.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission is committed to marshalling the full weight of its authorities and resources to reverse drowning trends nationwide.

Over the past year, the Commission has intensified its focus on drowning and water-safety hazards, including dangerous pool designs, unsafe access points, entrapment risks, and other conditions that can permit unsupervised children access to water. Today's action is part of that broader effort.

The Commission granted Petition CP 25-2 regarding child-resistant ladders intended for use with aboveground and portable pools because the record demonstrates that this issue warrants further action.

CPSC staff identified 128 reported fatal drowning incidents involving children under five years of age between 2020 and 2025 in cases where pool ladders were reported or believed to have been used to enter aboveground or portable pools. These preventable tragedies demonstrate that pool access remains a significant safety challenge and that additional measures are necessary to reduce the risk of child drowning.

The evidence before the Commission also demonstrates that existing standards do not currently provide a measurable and objective definition of what constitutes a child-resistant ladder. That gap must be addressed.

Today, the Commission directed staff to continue its work with ASTM, PHTA, medical experts, consumer advocates and industry stakeholders to develop meaningful performance requirements, objective measures of child resistance and stronger warnings designed to improve consumer engagement with safety features.

The Commission expects this effort to move forward promptly and produce meaningful results. If adequate progress is not achieved, mandatory federal requirements remain on the table.

Every drowning death represents a family tragedy. Many are preventable.

Protecting children from drowning is one of the most important safety challenges facing this agency. The Commission will continue to pursue practical, data-driven solutions that reduce risk, save lives and help prevent tragedies before they occur.

Whether the hazard involves pool design, barriers, ladders, entrapment risks or other means of unsupervised water access, the Commission will remain focused on one objective: keeping children safe in and around water.

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About CPSC

CPSC is the federal agency charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury associated with thousands of types of consumer products. Deaths, injuries, and property damage from consumer product-related incidents cost the nation more than \$1 trillion annually. Since the agency was established more than 50 years ago, CPSC has worked to ensure the safety of consumer products, contributing to a decline in related injuries.

Federal law prohibits any person from selling products subject to a Commission-ordered recall or to a voluntary recall undertaken in consultation with CPSC.

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- Report a dangerous product or a product-related injury on www.SaferProducts.gov.
- Call CPSC's Hotline at 800-638-2772 (TTY 800-638-8270).
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