



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

MINUTES OF COMMISSION MEETING

July 22, 1992

5401 Westbard Avenue

Bethesda, Maryland

The July 22, 1992, meeting of the U. S. Consumer Product Safety Commission was convened in open session by Chairman Jacqueline Jones-Smith. Commissioners Carol G. Dawson and Mary Sheila Gall were present.

Agenda Matter.

Fiscal Year 1994 Preliminary Budget Request

The Commission considered the agency's preliminary budget request for fiscal year (FY) 1994. On July 7, 1992, the staff briefed the Commission on a staff-recommended budget of \$44,730,000 and 515 full-time equivalent positions (FTEs) as set forth in the 1994 Preliminary Budget Request document transmitted by the Executive Director on June 23, 1992. In a supplemental memorandum dated July 15, 1992, the staff provided additional information on the preliminary budget recommendation in response to requests of the Commissioners at the July 7 briefing.

Following introductory comments by Chairman Jones-Smith, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to approve the following seven-point motion offered by Chairman Jones-Smith to reallocate certain resources contained in the staff-recommended budget:

1. Delete the proposed new Ladder Electrocutation project [six FTEs and \$213,000 in contracts];
2. Delete the proposed new Home Safety Checklist project [0.2 FTEs and \$42,000 in contracts];
3. Transfer the development of the prototype electronic bulletin board from Hazard Assessment and Reduction (HAR) to Hazard Identification and Analysis (HIA); [\$3,000 in contracts];
4. Increase HAR contract funding for Engineering and Health Sciences laboratories by \$142,000;

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FY 1994 Preliminary Budget Request, continued

5. Increase HAR projects resources by five FTEs;
6. Increase resources to Consumer Information (Office of Information and Public Affairs) by one FTE and \$43,000 in contracts; and,
7. Provide funding for Field Staff Conferences in the amount of \$70,000.

On motion of Commissioner Gall, the Commission voted unanimously (3-0) to delete from the staff-recommended budget the pilot project on Environmental Health Clinics and use the \$8,000 for laboratory improvements. The 0.5 FTEs will be distributed in HIA to strengthen existing projects.

Chairman Jones-Smith moved the following additions to the preliminary budget request:

1. Increase funding for Information Technology by \$750,000; and,
2. Increase funding for training by \$60,000.

The motion was approved by a vote of 2-1, with Chairman Jones-Smith and Commissioner Gall voting in favor and Commissioner Dawson voting against.

The Commission then voted 2-1 on motion of Chairman Jones-Smith to approve the FY 1994 Budget proposal as presented by the staff in its briefing package of June 23, 1992, and as amended here today. Chairman Jones-Smith and Commissioner Gall voted in favor; Commissioner Dawson voted in dissent.

Separate statements on the matter of the FY 1994 budget were filed by Chairman Jones-Smith, Commissioner Gall, and Commissioner Dawson, copies attached.

There being no further business on the agenda, Chairman Jones-Smith adjourned the meeting.

For the Commission:



Sadye E. Dunn, Secretary

Attachments

**Statement of Chairman Jacqueline Jones-Smith
on the
1994 Staff Budget Proposal
July 22, 1992**

I would like to thank the staff for their fine efforts in preparing the 1994 budget proposal. I know that a lot of hours from a lot of people goes into the preparation of a budget and I am appreciative, not only of the work of the gentlemen seated at the table, but particularly of the work of the ladies and gentlemen -- in headquarters and in the field -- who contribute in so many ways to the overall project. Your professionalism, thoughtfulness and commitment to the agency's mission clearly shows in the document.

Consideration of the agency's budget proposal is one of the best opportunities for the Commission to exercise its leadership responsibilities. A key leadership skill is the ability to listen...and then act.

The long range strategic planning process is far from over and many hard policy decisions remain to be made. The 1995 agency budget will be the first budget to receive the full benefit of policy guidance from the long range plan.

However, this Commission has listened a lot in recent months - - to the agency's staff, to the public and our partners in product safety, and to the Congress during our oversight hearings -- and I do not think that it is premature to at least begin to show in this 1994 budget that not only have we listened...we have heard...and we intend to act.

What are some of the most important messages?

- Overall -- prepare now for the future;
- In Hazard Assessment and Reduction -- focus on finishing current projects before starting new activities;
- In Hazard Identification and Analysis -- strengthen data collection and data analysis capabilities;
- In Consumer Information -- do more to get the word out to special, target populations;
- Agency-wide -- provide professional development opportunities and training to all levels of the staff, at headquarters and in the field;
- And with regard to infrastructure -- computerize the field and headquarters.

The staff's budget proposal before us moves in the right direction. I intend only to propose to my colleagues a slight rearrangement of resources and a very modest increase which will further respond to the messages we have heard.

I recommend that we delete the new Ladder Electrocution project, under HAR, and the new Home Safety Checklist project, found under both HAR and Consumer Information. The staff reports that as much as 60 percent of the ladder incidents occur in occupational settings and the checklist is narrowly focused on consumers planning to remodel older homes. Together, deletion of these two new projects frees resources of approximately six FTEs and \$255,000 in contract funds.

I propose that five of the six FTEs remain in the Hazard Assessment and Reduction program in order to bolster efforts to speed up or complete existing projects. The remaining FTE should be reallocated to the Office of Information and Public Affairs.

In a similar manner, \$142,000 in contract funds should be reallocated to Engineering and Health Sciences laboratory improvements, under the Hazard Assessment and Reduction program, which will benefit the entire spectrum of 1994 projects and the Commission's work well into the future.

The remaining \$113,000 would be reallocated: \$43,000 to Consumer Information and \$70,000 to fund Field Staff Conferences. These field staff conferences would bring together field and appropriate headquarters staff in each region to permit economical and effective training and communication on agency policies and practices.

Finally, I recommend that the development of the prototype electronic bulletin board, \$3,000 in contract funds, be transferred from Hazard Assessment and Reduction to Hazard Identification and Analysis. Establishment of an agency electronic bulletin board is an excellent idea. First, however, it should be developed as a means of facilitating data collection and information sharing between CPSC and existing state consumer agencies and other state and local contacts. Proceeding this way will provide our state and local partners with information and a new tool to assist their work with a broad range of consumers, some of whom have direct access to computers...most of whom do not.

None of these recommendations will increase the staff's recommended budget level of 515 FTEs and \$44.7 million.

I do intend, however, to make a separate recommendation that the 1994 budget be slightly increased by \$810,000, which is less than a two percent increase. This increase would be allocated: \$750,000 to the Information Technology Plan, to put our computerization efforts on track, and \$60,000 for staff training in computer skills and technology as well as broad professional development to prepare for our future. The need is there.



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STATEMENT OF
COMMISSIONER MARY SHEILA GALL
ON
THE CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
FY 1994 BUDGET PROPOSAL
July 22, 1992

I voted today to support a 1994 Budget Proposal of \$45,540,000 (as amended). This includes an increase of \$810,000 over the current services level -- less than a 2% increase in our budget. This allows us to take critical steps toward automating the Commission and improving our productivity. The Commission has an exceptionally talented and dedicated staff and they need the proper tools to do their jobs. While in the past there have been resources available at mid-year and end of year review, most have been made available as a result of forced under-ceiling constraints. Most of these resources were used in support of project activities. Few of these resources have been used to automate the Agency or upgrade our laboratories. However, as we approach operations at full staffing level, fewer end of year resources will be available. Training improvements cannot be implemented at the end of the year and to rely on year end funding for technology improvements would reflect poor planning on our part.

My motion to redistribute funds from a new project to laboratory improvements and my vote to redistribute funds from two other projects were intended to deal with the immediate and important needs of our laboratories in obtaining the modern equipment they need, to bolster the consumer information component of our hazard alert efforts, and training and technical development needs of our staff.

All of this is critical to meet our Agency's mission -- to protect consumers from unreasonable risks of injury and death associated with consumer products.



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DISSENT OF
COMMISSIONER CAROL G. DAWSON

ON ADOPTION OF PRELIMINARY 1994 CPSC BUDGET PROPOSAL

July 22, 1992

I could have supported the original staff-proposed 1994 preliminary budget request of \$44.7 million, which represented a modest increase over the 1993 request. However, I could not support my colleagues' decision to add nearly a million dollars more in enhancements, for a total of \$45.5 million. Therefore, I was forced to cast my vote against the final budget.

In keeping with my previous admonitions on CPSC's budget, the staff at last had produced a reasonable, comprehensive budget document, including some desirable new projects. At the \$44.7 million level, projects that were not completed in 1993 would have continued--some even being accelerated. Our one priority project, Home Electrical Systems Fires, would be fully funded.

Certainly I understand the desire to upgrade the agency's infrastructure. But, given the realities of the federal budget, such improvements should be built into the budget's overall numbers in an incremental manner. Moreover, I should point out that in each of the past several years there has been a substantial mid-year and year-end surplus which was used for these purposes.

While I supported several minor reallocations of funds, which would not have altered the original total, I saw no reason to load this budget with an additional \$810,000. Overall, federal budget deficit realities compelled me to oppose the resulting increase supported by my colleagues.