



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

Record of Commission Action
Commissioners Voting by Ballot

1111 - 18th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C.

Voting: Chairman King
Commissioner Pittle
Commissioner Sloan
Commissioner Zagoria

ITEM

Federal Register Denial Notice and Letter to Petitioner Setting Forth Reasons for Denial of Petition to Ban Skateboards, CP 79-3 (Ref: Record of Commission Action, Commission Meeting of June 21, 1979)

(Briefing material transmitted by the Office of the Secretary on July 17, 1979)

DECISION

The Commission approved the attached Federal Register notice setting forth reasons for the denial of the petition to ban skateboards, which was decided at the June 21, 1979, Commission Meeting.

VOTE

Concurring: Chairman King (8/10/79)
Commissioner Pittle (8/13/79)
Commissioner Sloan (8/13/79)
Commissioner Zagoria (8/13/79)

Attachment

For the Commission



Sadye E. Duhn, Secretary



U.S. CONSUMER PRODUCT SAFETY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20207

AUG 16 1979

Mrs. Ann Brown
Consumer Affairs Committee
Americans for Democratic Action
3005 Audubon Terrace, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20008

Dear Mrs. Brown:

The Consumer Product Safety Commission has considered your letter of October 23, 1978 petitioning the Commission to ban skateboards (CP 79-3). After carefully reviewing the petition and the available information, the Commission has denied your petition.

Section 10(d) of the Consumer Product Safety Act provides that when a petition is denied, the Commission shall publish its reasons for the denial in the FEDERAL REGISTER. The reasons for the Commission's denial in this case are set forth in the enclosed copy of the notice concerning your petition which has been forwarded to the FEDERAL REGISTER for publication.

Your interest in consumer product safety is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Robert C. Bledsoe, Jr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Robert C. Bledsoe, Jr.
Acting Secretary

Enclosure

injuries associated with skateboarding are primarily "use-related" rather than "product-related."

The 1978 *Hazard Analysis Report on Skateboards* prepared by Commission staff discusses the nature of the injuries that have been associated with skateboards.

The *Hazard Analysis* indicates that actual skateboard breakage, such as broken decks, fractured trucks, or wheels which fall off, were found to be causative factors in less than 2 percent of the skateboard-related injuries.¹ The main factors found to cause injuries were, in order of prominence: irregular riding surface, loss of balance, slipping from the board, jumping from the board, falling while turning, striking an obstacle, and the board slipping out from under the victim. The Commission concludes that the manner in which skateboards are used may be responsible for many skateboard-related injuries.

The *Hazard Analysis* also indicates that over one-half of skateboard-related injuries are sustained to the lower arm or leg. Fractures appear to be the most common type of injury, occurring in one-third of all injuries. In addition, a total of 25 deaths from skateboard-related accidents between 1975-77 have been reported through Commission files and newspaper articles. These accidents generally happened in one of two ways: victims either fell from the skateboards and struck their heads or victims were struck by automobiles while riding skateboards.

An analysis of injuries reported through the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS) indicates that the incidence of skateboard associated injuries has decreased from an estimate of 140,000 in calendar year 1977 to an estimated 87,000 in calendar year 1978. The Commission notes that this is a reversal from the continuous rise in injuries from 1974 through 1977. While one of the reasons for the downward trend in injuries may be a decrease in the popularity of the sport, the Commission believes that an increased use of off-street skating sites and skate parks may have contributed to the decrease in injuries. In addition, while the Commission does not know how effective these items are in reducing injuries, there is an increased use of safety equipment such as helmets,

knee pads, and elbow pads while skateboarding.

The Commission also believes that a ban is not necessary at this time because there appears to be an increased awareness of skateboarding safety on the part of state and local jurisdictions, which are promoting safety at the community level. As noted above, this awareness, along with an increased use of skateboard parks and safety equipment, may be partly responsible for the recent reduction in injuries.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing, the Commission concludes that current information indicates that a mandatory banning regulation for skateboards is not needed at this time. The Commission, therefore, denies the petition.

The Commission notes, however, that it is concerned about the many serious injuries that have been associated with skateboarding. The Commission has instructed its staff to monitor any efforts to develop voluntary safety requirements for skateboards and to maintain continued liaison with national, state, and local organizations concerned with skateboard safety. The Commission also plans to continue its efforts in the area of consumer information and education relating to skateboarding.

Copies of the petition, the 1978 *Hazard Analysis Report on Skateboards*, and the Commission staff's briefing materials on the petition may be obtained from the Office of the Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission, 1111 18th St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20207.

Dated: August 15, 1979.

Robert C. Bledsoe, Jr.,

Acting Secretary, Consumer Product Safety Commission.

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¹ The Commission recognizes, however, that certain design or product features of skateboards (e.g., turning characteristics of boards, deck materials, truck width and placement, wheel diameter, etc.) are factors in skateboard associated accidents and that injuries might be reduced by improved product design in these areas.