

Thank you for inviting me to join you today, for what is actually my first public appearance as Commissioner

It is a pleasure to be here with the people who design, manufacture, test, distribute, and sell the products that millions of Americans use every day.

I have had the privilege to see the Consumer Product Safety Commission through multiple lenses: first as Executive Director, leading the agency's operations, and now as a Commissioner, helping shape its policy and regulatory decisions.

Those roles - along with my prior experience in the public and private sectors -- reinforced three principles that will guide my approach as a commissioner.

First, I believe we should look first to industry and voluntary standards to address safety risks, whenever they can provide an effective solution.

That does not mean that federal regulation is never appropriate. Congress has given CPSC important authorities, and there will be circumstances in which the Commission needs to use them.

But regulation should not automatically be the first answer.

When industry, consumers, technical experts, and government can work together to identify a hazard and develop an effective voluntary standard, I believe that can be a very powerful way to protect consumers.

Industry often has insight that government simply does not, such as knowledge of engineering, materials, manufacturing processes, supply chains, testing, and what is technically achievable.

And voluntary standards have an additional advantage: they can evolve as products, technology, and our understanding of risk evolve.

So my objective is not to tell industry what the answer should be.

Rather, my objective is to ensure that CPSC has the information necessary to understand the problem, assess the risk, and determine the most effective way to address it.

Second, I believe CPSC decisions should be grounded in data and evidence.

I don't just believe in data-driven government as an ideal. I have spent much of my career building organizations that use data and technology to make better decisions.

And when I came to CPSC, I saw an opportunity to apply those same principles to consumer product safety.

As Executive Director, my responsibility was fundamentally operational -- make the agency work better so that our safety professionals could do their jobs more effectively.

We focused on strengthening operations, improving enforcement and import surveillance, modernizing technology, and using our resources more strategically.

CPSC's modernization of the National Fatality Surveillance System demonstrates how strategic investment in government technology directly strengthens public safety.

For decades, the agency waited up to three years to receive critical death data and relied on a slow, manual workflow requiring weeks of processing and more than nineteen handoffs.

Through a national integration with the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems, we have replaced this outdated system with secure, standardized electronic reporting —

reducing state reporting delays from 1.5 years to under 30 days, cutting end to end processing time by more than 92 percent, and shrinking individual review time from five hours to just ten minutes.

Analyst workload has been cut nearly in half, legacy systems have been retired, and data delivered to the agency is now more reliable, timely, and actionable.

And we were able to translate our focus on efficiency into measurable results:

- The average number of monthly recalls is up 74%.
- The average number of monthly takedowns is up 204%.
- The average number of monthly unilateral warnings is up 155%.
- The average number of monthly products screened at ports of entry is up 15%.

Those increases came with stable or reduced staffing and funding levels, so they were absolutely due to increased efficiency. And we know that technology and process reforms can help make us even more efficient moving forward.

Those numbers are important, but the numbers themselves are not the objective.

The objective is to make CPSC better at finding hazards, getting dangerous products out of the marketplace, and protecting consumers.

And that brings me to the third principle that I want to emphasize today.

CPSC should focus particular attention on hazards that consumers cannot reasonably identify or mitigate themselves.

There is an important distinction between an obvious hazard and a hidden or complex one.

If a hazard is readily apparent and can reasonably be avoided through ordinary care, consumers have an important role to play in protecting themselves.

But some hazards are very different.

They may be hidden in the design of a product, the manufacturing process, the materials used, or the interaction of multiple components.

They may require laboratory testing, engineering expertise, toxicological analysis, incident investigation, or sophisticated data analysis to identify.

A consumer should not have to be an engineer, chemist, toxicologist, or data scientist to safely use a product.

That is where I believe CPSC can add the greatest value.

And that is why I have been focused on expanding the information available to the agency.

CPSC has some extraordinarily valuable sources of information, including injury reports, incident data, recalls, enforcement information, import information, laboratory test results, and the expertise of our field professionals.

But I believe we need to look beyond the information we have traditionally relied upon.

We should ask what other sources of information can help us understand hazards earlier.

What can we learn from e-commerce and global supply chains?

What can import data tell us?

What can product testing tell us?

What can consumer behavior tell us?

And how can we responsibly combine those sources of information with our existing data to identify meaningful safety signals?

Not to collect data simply because we can.

The objective is to connect the right information to answer the right questions.

Can we identify a hazard earlier?

Can we distinguish a meaningful safety signal from background noise?

Can we identify where a risk is concentrated?

Can we determine which products or manufacturers warrant greater attention?

And ultimately, can we intervene before someone gets hurt rather than after?

That is the opportunity that technology and advanced analytics give us.

It allows CPSC to move further upstream, from being primarily reactive to becoming increasingly predictive.

We will never become a pre-market approver of products. That's not our job under the law, and it wouldn't be the best use of our resources. But I believe it is possible for us to improve our operations to help spot problems earlier than we do today.

This is also why the relationship between CPSC and BIFMA is important.

There is a long history of constructive dialogue and collaboration between the Commission and the furniture industry.

BIFMA brings tremendous technical and practical knowledge to the standards-development process.

CPSC brings expertise in injury data, hazard analysis, compliance, enforcement, and consumer protection.

When those capabilities come together in a constructive way, everyone benefits — particularly and most importantly, consumers.

At the same time, I want to be clear that I am not here today to prejudge any existing BIFMA standard, any ongoing standards-development activity, or any future Commission action.

Those decisions need to be based on the facts, the evidence, the applicable law, and the Commission's deliberative process.

But I can tell you what I will bring to those decisions.

I will bring a strong preference for evidence over assumptions.

I will bring a commitment to using the best information available.

I will bring an interest in identifying hazards before they become injuries.

And I will bring a willingness to listen — to consumers, to industry, to scientists, to engineers, to our career professionals, and to anyone who has information that can help us make a better decision.

Now looking ahead, we must recognize that the consumer product marketplace is changing rapidly.

Products are becoming more sophisticated. Supply chains are becoming more complex. E-commerce is changing how products reach consumers. New materials, energy-storage technologies, connectivity, and artificial intelligence are becoming increasingly common in products.

Our approach to safety needs to evolve with them.

I don't believe the answer is necessarily for government to do more.

I believe the answer is for government to do the right things, at the right time, based on the best information available.

That means encouraging effective voluntary standards.

It means using data and technology to see risks earlier.

It means focusing CPSC's resources on hazards that consumers cannot reasonably identify or avoid.

And it means maintaining constructive relationships with organizations like BIFMA, while preserving the responsibilities of the Commission.

Ultimately, I think all of us in this room share the same fundamental objective:

We want Americans to be able to use consumer products with confidence.

My goal as a Commissioner is to help make that possible by making CPSC more data-driven, more forward-looking, and more focused on the risks where government can make the greatest difference.

Thank you for having me today. I look forward to continuing the dialogue, and I hope you enjoy the rest of the Summit.