



**Testimony of Ann Marie Buerkle
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Hearing on “Oversight of the Consumer Product Safety Commission”

**U.S. Senate
Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation
Subcommittee on Manufacturing, Trade, and Consumer Protection**

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Good morning, Chairman Moran, Ranking Member Blumenthal, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am pleased to be before the Committee once again to discuss the progress being made at the Consumer Product Safety Commission.

As you know, earlier this week I announced my intention to step down as Acting Chairman and complete only my current term as a member of the Commission. I feel honored for the opportunity to have served as a Commissioner for the Consumer Product Safety Commission since 2013, and as the Acting Chair for two and half years. My respect for this Agency, its mission, and most importantly, for the staff, has grown with each and every year that I have been with CPSC. It has been both a pleasure and a privilege to work with so many talented and capable individuals.

Throughout my time with the agency, I have led with integrity and principle – always with our safety mission above politics. I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments achieved during my tenure and deeply appreciate the support and excellent work by the CPSC staff. We have taken many actions that save lives every day including:

- Initiating a multi-pronged approach on strengthening furniture tipover safety standards and enforcement
- Eliminating window cords in 80% of the market to prevent child strangulation
- Educating people on the dangers of carbon monoxide poisoning and facilitating the development of new portable generator standards, resulting in safer products being introduced into the market
- Guided the disbursement of over \$2 million in grants to reduce drownings and pool entrapments
- Approving 14 new or revised mandatory standards, many of them for children and infant products
- Leading CPSC's efforts to address the safety of the Internet of Things, including the formation of an interagency working group
- Jumpstarting a process to improve and modernize saferproducts.gov

In addition, CPSC is better positioned to be effective and efficient because of the agency-wide improvements made under my leadership. We have taken steps to modernize the agency both with data and technological advancements as well as enhancing the organization and prioritization of staff and resources. The work we have done, and that continues to occur, will help ensure that CPSC is equipped to succeed in

a rapidly changing global marketplace where the types of products and how consumers buy and interact with those products is constantly evolving.

Engagement with all stakeholders has been a priority for me and it has produced results. I have regular calls with consumer safety groups to understand and respond to their priorities. They provided critical suggestions to improve saferproducts.gov. Some of their suggested changes we were able to make the very next day. Others, we are examining as we develop our plan for updating the site.

To help us better understand the products we regulate, I have asked staff to hold several tech-to-tech meetings. These meetings help our staff understand how products work in real world situations and help regulated industries understand the concerns of our staff and the issues that manufacturers need to address.

Finally, no group has been more influential than the victims and their families that I have met over the years. Their courage, resolve and desire to ensure that no other parent, relative or loved one has to suffer the tragedy they faced has helped me never lose sight of the importance of CPSC's mission and its effect on Americans. The efforts of parents who have lost children to furniture tipovers is why I have called for a tougher standards for these products.

These achievements could not have been accomplished without the CPSC staff, who truly are the backbone of our agency. However, they need the proper resources to do their job. As you have heard me say again and again, CPSC needs more resources. CPSC's mission has long dwarfed its budget. I am proud that my advocacy for the agency has resulted in Congress and this Administration providing increased funding and resources for the CPSC each year since I've been Acting Chairman, including the House's current mark of \$135.5 million. My hope is that as I depart, this trend continues and that CPSC's budget is able to be on par with its critical mission.

Following my departure from CPSC, my hope is that staff and the Commission will build upon the successes of my tenure, as I have sought to build on the legacies of those that came before me. I hope my efforts to put politics aside and make principled decision-making will continue, making civility and robust engagement a priority. And I hope it is an agency that continues to leverage the expertise and knowledge of our staff to advance safety measures for consumers everywhere.

My life's work has always been in advocacy, healthcare, and public service. I believe that my time at the CPSC has been a culmination of a lifetime of these experiences and has made the American public safer. I truly look forward to the next

chapter of my life and will continue my service to community, country and most importantly my six wonderful children and 18 grandchildren.

It has been an honor to serve both the Obama and Trump administrations to protect Americans and keep their families safe. Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.