

Opening Statement of Joseph P. Mohorovic
Nominee to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission
4/8/2014

Thank you Madam Chairman.

“Madam Chairman; Senator Heller; distinguished members of the Committee:

Thank you very much for the opportunity to appear before you today as a nominee to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission. I am deeply honored and humbled by the President’s nomination of me to the CPSC and for the opportunity to address you and answer your questions today.

And thank you to Senator Udall for that generous introduction.

If I may Madam Chairman, I would first like to introduce my lovely wife, Royelle. My three beautiful daughters, six-year-old twins Gigi and Lucy and our newest addition to the Mohorovic clan, two-year-old Stevie are home with their grandmother, but always home in my heart.

With three small girls at home, I’m reminded every day how critical the CPSC’s mission is to protect America’s most vulnerable consumers.

And after having spent almost a decade working for the largest international provider of quality assurance and safety services to the consumer goods industry, I understand intimately the challenges faced by manufacturers and retailers operating in global supply chains.

With an enduring commitment to public service that began when I was elected to the New Mexico legislature at age twenty seven, I’d like to offer my risk management skillset to help modernize the CPSC and effectively regulate for safety in the 21st Century

While the agency’s regulatory agenda, strategic plans and emerging hazards direct the agency’s priorities, if confirmed, there are three areas of CPSC activity I would like to focus on personally. They are 1) Modernizing CPSC’s Import Surveillance Strategy 2) Addressing Furniture and Television Tip-over Hazards; and 3) Better leveraging the expertise of the broader safety community .

First, Improving Import Surveillance.

If confirmed, I will make it one of my highest priorities to continue to modernize CPSC’s import surveillance program. The vast majority of products under CPSC jurisdiction are imported. And a disproportionate share of recalled products is imported. I can think of no better way of assuring consumer safety than by ensuring the compliance of imports to U.S. safety expectations. Specifically, I will work to further integrate current import surveillance programs with those of Customs and Border Protection. I recognize that the agency has made tremendous strides in recent years, including the development of their risk assessment tools. I would like to contribute my personal knowledge of the latest targeting techniques used by the world’s most sophisticated

supply chains to identify imports with greater safety risk. Furthermore, I think the agency can do more to facilitate legitimate trade through public-private partnerships for those importers willing to subject their compliance processes to greater scrutiny – not unlike the successful “TSA Pre-Check” program for low risk air travelers. I can envision a modernized CPSC import surveillance program where harmful and non-compliant consumer goods are intercepted and deterred, while legitimate cargo is identified and rapidly admitted to consumers without disruption.

Second, Addressing Furniture and Television Tip-over Hazards.

Tragically, every two weeks in America, a child dies when a television, appliance or piece of furniture falls on him or her. With three small children at home, I personally know how vigilant parents must be to follow the CPSC’s strategy of “anchor and protect.” Only a few years ago my nephew broke his arm when the dresser he was using as a ladder toppled over on him. Some manufacturers and retailers do an admirable job educating consumers and facilitating the safe use of their products including the proper use of tether and anchoring devices. And I have also experienced the frustration of working with some products whose manufacturers seem blind to the hazard and thwart the efforts of a diligent parent endeavoring to create an environment safe for children. Addressing this very deadly and hidden home hazard is a personal cause for me and one that will, if confirmed, be a top priority.

Third, Leveraging the Expertise of CPSC Stakeholders.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, I would work to not only aggressively pursue those products and companies that truly put American consumers at risk, but to do so by leveraging wherever possible the input and efforts of all agency stakeholders. There is now underway a tremendous level of activity on the part of both industry and consumer advocacy groups that in my view the CPSC can learn from, contribute to, and generally use to leverage the agency’s limited resources. I envision a more accessible CPSC a more engaged CPSC and one where members of the international safety community are solicited for support, partnership, advice, recommendations and models to better inform CPSC public policy and improve effectiveness.

Conclusion

In conclusion Madam Chairman, the mission of the CPSC, in my view, is nothing less than a sacred one. American consumers have the right to know and have confidence that the products they buy, use, and indeed that they give to their children, are safe. I assure you and this Committee that, if confirmed to serve as a Commissioner, I will personally and with every ounce of my faculties uphold that sacred obligation and tradition of excellence that the CPSC embodies.

I again thank you, Chairman McCaskill and distinguished members of the Committee for your time and for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I look forward to answering your questions.