



Opening Statement of Ann Marie Buerkle

Nominee for Chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission

September 27, 2017

Good morning, Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and distinguished members of the Committee. I am deeply honored and humbled by the President's nomination to be Chairman of the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and for the opportunity to address you this morning.

Ranking Member Nelson and Senators Rubio and Cruz, please know that my thoughts and prayers continue to be with your constituents recovering from the devastating hurricanes in Florida and Texas. I assure you that the CPSC will remain vigilant and continue to use every tool at its disposal to raise consumer awareness about post-storm hazards, particularly those related to the improper use of portable generators and resultant carbon monoxide poisonings. Along with promoting our safety messages through traditional and social media, we will continue to engage with CPSC field staff in the affected areas, other federal agencies, state and local public safety counterparts, and major retailers to educate consumers and share potentially life-saving information.

I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to my colleagues, Commissioners Robert Adler, Marietta Robinson, Elliot Kaye, and Joseph Mohorovic, for their support of my nomination as well as their friendship. In addition, I would like to thank CPSC's staff who have assisted and supported me throughout this process. I am honored to work alongside such talented and dedicated public servants.

Finally, I would like to thank my family for their continuous love and support. Two of my six children are here today, my son Tom from Texas and daughter Caroline, from New York. Also here is my brother, Marine Corp Colonel Tom Colella. Thank you all for being here.

For me, having the opportunity to lead CPSC is the culmination of many aspects of my life. I began my professional career in nursing and then, at the age of 40, went to law school. After receiving my law degree, I went on to work as a New York State Assistant Attorney General representing a Level One Trauma Hospital in Upstate New York. In addition, for more than a decade, I was a strong advocate for victims of domestic violence by providing pro bono legal counseling for residents at a local women's shelter. I then had the honor of serving the people of New York's 25th Congressional District in Congress and in 2013, President Obama appointed me to serve as a Commissioner at CPSC.

My most important role, however, has been raising my six children and being actively involved in the lives of my seventeen grandchildren. Whether it is making sure

the grandchildren practice water safety or that my kids are buying safe nursery products, as a mother and a grandmother, safety is always on my mind.

I have spent my life in advocacy and I believe that my background gives me a unique perspective as well as the ability to carry out CPSC's critical mission of keeping American consumers safe.

CPSC's priorities are ultimately guided by our regulatory agenda, strategic plan, and operating plan. If confirmed, I will personally try to focus on areas where we can be most effective in carrying out our safety mission, by:

- (1) Ensuring that our resources are dedicated to the highest priority risks and that we focus on emerging hazards from new technologies.
- (2) Remaining vigilant in monitoring the safety of imported products by continuing our excellent working relationship with Customs and Border Patrol and enhancing our import surveillance program. One of the best ways to keep consumers safe is to keep unsafe products from entering the U.S. marketplace altogether.
- (3) Maintaining robust engagement in voluntary standards development and strengthening the agency's collaboration with manufacturers, retailers, consumer advocates, other government agencies, academia, and all stakeholders to advance consumer safety.
- (4) Enhancing the Agency's data capabilities by expanding both the sources and the types of data we receive as well as our analytical capabilities. Congress created CPSC as a data-driven agency. Sound science and reliable data is critical to our mission of safety and during my tenure I hope to further modernize CPSC.

CPSC's mission is a critical one. Nothing is more important than the safety of our children and our families. I do not take the responsibility to lead this agency and execute its mission lightly, and I will do so with diligence and the utmost humility if confirmed by this distinguished body.

Thank you again, Chairman Thune, Ranking Member Nelson, and members of the committee. If confirmed, I hope this hearing will be just the beginning of a collaborative and productive relationship with Congress. Thank you for your service to our nation. I look forward to answering any questions you may have.