



COMPOSITE PANEL ASSOCIATION

Advancing the wood-based panel and decorative surfacing industries

19465 Deerfield Avenue, Suite 306, Leesburg, Virginia 20176
Tel 703.724.1128 • 866.4COMPOSITES • Fax 703.724.1588

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 11, 2009

MORE INFORMATION

Tom Julia
703.405.5602
tjulia@cpamail.org

CPA-URGED FORMALDEHYDE LEGISLATION INTRODUCED IN US SENATE

After nine months of development and coalition-building among industry and environmental groups, landmark legislation calling for a national standard on formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products was introduced in the U.S. Senate on September 11th.

Co-sponsored by Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Sen. Mike Crapo (R-ID), S. 1660, The Formaldehyde Standards for Composite Wood Products Act, establishes the first ever national standard for product emission ceilings. It also directs the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to implement regulations on testing, certification, recordkeeping and enforcement to give American consumers the highest level of confidence in composite wood products purchased for their homes and offices.

The legislation is based on the regulation promulgated last year by the California Air Resources Board (CARB), and would add a new section to the federal Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and require EPA to enact a national rule by 2011. Senators Klobuchar and Crapo sit on the Environment and Public Works Committee as well as the relevant subcommittee that oversees TSCA.

"This a great day for American consumers and industry alike," said Tom Julia, President of the Composite Panel Association (CPA), which joined with the Sierra Club in first proposing the legislation.

"By focusing on our shared commitment to reduce formaldehyde emissions from composite wood products through an enforceable standard, CPA and the Sierra Club have forged a strong partnership to protect all Americans," said Tom Neltner, Chairman of the Sierra Club's National Toxics Committee.

Last year after EPA was petitioned by the Sierra Club and others to develop a national regulation for formaldehyde emissions from composite wood, the agency published an Advanced Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. "The Notice included a range of regulatory options, all of which could lead to a complex and divisive rulemaking process that would require many years to complete," said Julia. "We knew right away there had to be a better way and began working with other industry groups and the environmental community, as well as with regulators in California and at EPA", he continued.

MORE

CANADA

Post Office Box 747, Station "B", Ottawa, Ontario K1P 5P8 • Tel 613.232.6782 • Fax 703.724.1588

INTERNATIONAL TESTING AND CERTIFICATION CENTER

73 Lawson Road, Suite 101, Leesburg, Virginia 20175 • Tel 703.724.1128 • Fax 703.724.1588

www.pbmdf.com

EPA also took public comments at six forums around the country, including New Orleans, where formaldehyde emissions from FEMA-issued emergency trailers were the focus. “CPA testified at all of these forums and argued forcefully for a national standard that included third party testing and certification to give assurance to both government and consumers,” said Julia. “We believe a national standard is the right thing to do, that California has provided a starting point, and that the bill now before Congress represents a rare bipartisan opportunity to serve the American public,” he added.

The legislation does not copy the CARB rule but instead extracts its core components and writes them into TSCA, including the following:

- Applies to particleboard, medium density fiberboard (MDF) and hardwood plywood manufactured or sold in the U.S, as well as finished products containing them;
- Sets emission ceilings identical to the CARB rule;
- Requires EPA to establish implementing regulations based on California’s rule, including third party testing and certification of quality control measures in composite panel manufacturing facilities, and the ability to track and verify the use of compliant products through their distribution and use in finished products such as furniture, cabinets, flooring doors, etc.;
- Requires EPA to recognize and incentivize the use of ultra low emitting formaldehyde (ULEF) and no-added formaldehyde (NAF) adhesives in composite wood products; and
- Requires EPA to work with other federal agencies to provide for equally robust compliance verification of imported products as well as those manufactured in the U.S., and corresponding enforcement.

North American manufacturers of composite wood products have put in place rigorous programs to meet the California rule, and nearly 100% of U.S. production is already California complaint. “This is a significant accomplishment, but enforcement is still only possible in California and not the other forty-nine states,” said Julia. “Without a national standard it will be difficult to monitor the compliance of products sold into those states as well as those imported from around the world. CPA is pleased that Senators Klobuchar and Crapo have taken the lead to advance product stewardship, promote green jobs, and ensure a level playing field for domestic manufacturers,” he added.

Other organizations supporting the legislation and participating in its development include the American Forest & Paper Association, Alliance for Healthy Homes, APA-The Engineered Wood Association, Business and Institutional Furniture Manufacturers Association, Hardwood Plywood & Veneer Association, National Center for Healthy Housing, National Environmental Health Association, and United Steelworkers Union.

CPA is hopeful that the legislation is promptly enacted by Congress so EPA can initiate its rulemaking next year with this legislative guidance in place.

###