

**OPENING STATEMENT**  
The Honorable José Serrano  
Chairman, Financial Services and General Government Subcommittee  
House Committee on Appropriations

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Hearing on the Consumer Product Safety Commission  
Fiscal Year 2011 Budget Request  
March 4, 2010

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The subcommittee will come to order. Today, the subcommittee meets to discuss the fiscal year 2011 budget request of the Consumer Product Safety Commission. Joining us today are the Chairman of the CPSC, Inez Tenenbaum, as well as CPSC Commissioner Nancy Nord. We thank you for joining us today.

For fiscal year 2011, the budget request for the Consumer Product Safety Commission is \$118.6 million. The agency has seen its responsibilities grow enormously the last few years. In response to a large number of product hazards and product recalls, Congress enacted the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act of 2008. This law, together with other recent legislation addressing pool and spa safety and the protection of children from gasoline burns, provides for important consumer protections, but it has also essentially doubled the workload of the CPSC. It is important to determine whether the agency's staffing levels are adequate to fulfill these responsibilities. In 2007, when I became Chairman of this subcommittee, the CPSC had fewer than 400 full-time employees. Funding increases provided by this subcommittee have enabled the CPSC to grow to 530 full-time employees in fiscal year 2010, a more than 30 percent increase in staffing in three years. However, this is still far less than the agency's staffing thirty years ago, when the CPSC had 978 employees.

A strong CPSC is more important than ever. This is particularly evident in the area of imported products. The volume of imported products has doubled in the past 15 years, and while imports account for 20 percent of all consumer product purchases, they account for more than 80 percent of recent product recalls. GAO reported last August that CPSC's ability to monitor imported products is limited by staffing shortfalls. The fiscal year 2010 Appropriations Act included funding to help address this problem, and I am pleased that the fiscal year 2011 budget requests additional resources for the CPSC's Import Safety Initiative. It is important for this subcommittee to determine whether these resources are truly adequate to ensure the safety of imported products.

The Commission has worked hard to implement the many provisions of the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act. At the same time, we have heard about confusion among manufacturers, distributors, and retailers about particular requirements. I am interested in knowing how implementation is going right now, whether industry is

complying, and whether the CPSC is devoting adequate resources toward enforcing the new law's many important consumer protections.

In addition to implementing these consumer protections, the new law directed the CPSC to establish a public, internet-accessible database on the safety of consumer products. The agency is also preparing to move into a modernized laboratory facility designed to enhance its research on product hazards. Furthermore, the CPSC has begun an effort to work more closely with manufacturers and regulators in China, by opening an office in Beijing.

I am interested in hearing about the status of all these efforts and how the budget request will enhance them going forward.

Chairman Tenenbaum joined the Commission in June 2009. She has a long history in public service, including eight years as South Carolina's State Superintendent of Education. Commissioner Nord is no stranger to this subcommittee. This is her third appearance before us. She has served on the CPSC since 2005 and served as acting chairman from 2006 to 2009. We thank you both for your testimony today and look forward to a very informative discussion.

At this time, I'd like to recognize the subcommittee's Ranking Member, Ms. Emerson.