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Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

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June 4, 2008

Mr. Steve Bennett
President
Pilgrim International, Inc.
105 14th Avenue
Middlebury, IN 46540

Dear Mr. Bennett:

I am writing to request your testimony at a hearing on Thursday, July 10, 2008, at 10:00 a.m. in Room 2154 Rayburn House Office Building. This hearing will examine the elevated levels of formaldehyde found in the travel trailers the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided to victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005.

On February 29, 2008, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released its "Interim Findings on Formaldehyde Levels in FEMA-Supplied Travel Trailers, Park Models, and Mobile Homes."¹ The interim report showed that formaldehyde levels in many of the travel trailers, park models, and mobile homes FEMA provided to victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005 are at such high levels they are a health risk to the individuals and families residing in them.² Based upon its findings, CDC recommended that FEMA immediately begin relocating victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes still living in FEMA-supplied travel trailers, park models, and mobile homes.³

FEMA-supplied travel trailers manufactured by Pilgrim International, Inc., were among those tested by CDC that had "statistically significantly higher levels of formaldehyde" than other travel trailers.⁴ The results showed that 51% of the tested Pilgrim travel trailers had levels

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, *Interim Findings on Formaldehyde Levels in FEMA-Supplied Travel Trailers, Park Models, and Mobile Homes* (Feb. 29, 2008) (online at www.cdc.gov/features/fematrailerfindings/pdf/interim_findings.pdf).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 18.

⁴ *Id.* at 10.

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of formaldehyde higher than 100 parts per billion (ppb).⁵ This is the level at which the Environmental Protection Agency has stated adverse health effects become apparent.⁶ And it is significantly above the 16 ppb level recommended by the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health for exposure to formaldehyde in a workplace over an 8-hour period.⁷

At the hearing, you should be prepared to address this CDC report. You should also be prepared to testify about why elevated levels of formaldehyde were found in the travel trailers your company manufactured.

In preparation for this hearing, I ask that you provide the following documents to the Committee:

1. All communications between Pilgrim and any Pilgrim subcontractor regarding formaldehyde in the Pilgrim travel trailers sold to FEMA following the Gulf Coast Hurricanes of 2005, including all communications regarding the use of formaldehyde in the manufacturing process or any process used to decrease or minimize the levels of formaldehyde.
2. All other documents related to formaldehyde in Pilgrim travel trailers sold to FEMA following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005.
3. Documents sufficient to show (a) how many Pilgrim travel trailers have been sold in each of the last eight years, (b) how much revenue the sale of these travel trailers generated for Pilgrim each year, (c) how many were purchased by FEMA, whether directly or through a distributor, following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005, and (d) how much revenue the sale of these travel trailers to FEMA, whether to FEMA directly or through a distributor, generated for Pilgrim.
4. Documents sufficient to show the compensation provided to Pilgrim's Chief Executive Officer and President for each of the last eight years, including salary, bonuses, stock options, and all other forms of compensation.
5. Documents sufficient to show whether and, if so, how formaldehyde was used in the production of the Pilgrim travel trailers FEMA provided to victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005.

⁵ *Id.* at 13.

⁶ Environmental Protection Agency: An Introduction to Indoor Air Quality (online at www.epa.gov/iaq/formalde.html) (Accessed on June 2, 2008).

⁷ National Institute for Occupational Health and Safety, *NIOSH Pocket Guide to Chemical Hazards* (NIOSH Publication No. 2005-149) (Sept. 2005).

6. Documents sufficient to show why Pilgrim travel trailers purchased by FEMA following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005 have levels of formaldehyde above 100 parts per billion two years after they were first put into use.
7. Documents sufficient to show (a) what process, if any, Pilgrim used to decrease or minimize the levels of formaldehyde in the travel trailers it produces, and (b) whether these processes were used for the travels trailers purchased by FEMA.
8. Documents sufficient to show whether Pilgrim voluntarily followed the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's formaldehyde emission controls standard for wood products for manufactured homes for the Pilgrim travel trailers purchased by FEMA.
9. Documents sufficient to show whether Pilgrim tests the formaldehyde emissions of the components or parts it uses to assemble travel trailers and, if so, the results of the tests for the components or parts used in the production of the travel trailers purchased by FEMA.
10. Documents sufficient to show whether Pilgrim tests the indoor air concentrations of formaldehyde in its travel trailers and, if so, the results of these tests.
11. Documents sufficient to show (a) whether Pilgrim ever received complaints or concerns about formaldehyde from employees tasked with assembling travel trailers, and (b) whether it received complaints or concerns in 2005 or 2006 and, if so, Pilgrim's response to the complaints.
12. Documents sufficient to show (a) whether Pilgrim received complaints about formaldehyde or a strong odor from displaced residents of the Gulf Coast hurricanes living in FEMA-supplied Pilgrim travel trailers, (b) the number of complaints it received, and (c) its response to the complaints.
13. Documents sufficient to show (a) when Pilgrim first learned about the public health concerns related to the levels of formaldehyde in the Pilgrim travel trailers FEMA supplied to displaced residents of the Gulf Coast, (b) how it learned this information, and (c) Pilgrim's response to the information.
14. Documents sufficient to show what actions, if any, Pilgrim has taken in light of the elevated formaldehyde levels found in travel trailers it manufactured.

As you know, I previously requested much of this information on February 14, 2008. Unfortunately, Pilgrim has to date refused to provide the information to the Committee voluntarily. In light of this record, I ask you to commit by Friday, June 6, to producing

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voluntarily all of the responsive documents by Friday, June 13. If you are unwilling to cooperate voluntarily with the Committee, I will initiate steps for compulsory process.

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee in the House of Representatives and has broad oversight jurisdiction as set forth in House Rule X. An attachment to this letter provides additional information about how to respond to the Committee's request. Information for witnesses appearing before the Committee is contained in the enclosed Witness Information Sheet.

If you have any questions concerning this request, please contact Erik Jones of the Committee staff at (202) 225-4407.

Sincerely,



Henry A. Waxman
Chairman

Enclosures

cc: Tom Davis
Ranking Minority Member