

HENRY A. WAXMAN, CALIFORNIA,
CHAIRMAN

TOM LANTOS, CALIFORNIA
EDOLPHUS TOWNS, NEW YORK
PAUL E. KANJORSKI, PENNSYLVANIA
CAROLYN B. MALONEY, NEW YORK
ELIJAH E. CUMMINGS, MARYLAND
DENNIS J. KUCINICH, OHIO
DANNY K. DAVIS, ILLINOIS
JOHN F. TIERNEY, MASSACHUSETTS
WM. LACY CLAY, MISSOURI
DIANE E. WATSON, CALIFORNIA
STEPHEN F. LYNCH, MASSACHUSETTS
BRIAN HIGGINS, NEW YORK
JOHN A. YARMUTH, KENTUCKY
BRUCE L. BRALEY, IOWA
ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON,
DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BETTY McCOLLUM, MINNESOTA
JIM COOPER, TENNESSEE
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN, MARYLAND
PAUL W. HODES, NEW HAMPSHIRE
CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY, CONNECTICUT
JOHN P. SARBANES, MARYLAND
PETER WELCH, VERMONT

ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051
FACSIMILE (202) 225-4784
MINORITY (202) 225-5074

www.oversight.house.gov

TOM DAVIS, VIRGINIA,
RANKING MINORITY MEMBER

DAN BURTON, INDIANA
CHRISTOPHER SHAYS, CONNECTICUT
JOHN M. McHUGH, NEW YORK
JOHN L. MICA, FLORIDA
MARK E. SOUDER, INDIANA
TODD RUSSELL PLATTS, PENNSYLVANIA
CHRIS CANNON, UTAH
JOHN J. DUNCAN, JR., TENNESSEE
MICHAEL R. TURNER, OHIO
DARRELL E. ISSA, CALIFORNIA
KENNY MARCHANT, TEXAS
LYNN A. WESTMORELAND, GEORGIA
PATRICK T. McHENRY, NORTH CAROLINA
VIRGINIA FOXX, NORTH CAROLINA
BRIAN P. BILBRAY, CALIFORNIA
BILL SALI, IDAHO
JIM JORDAN, OHIO

June 4, 2008

Mr. Peter Liegl
President and Chief Executive Officer
Forest River, Inc.
55470 County Road 1
Elkhart, IN 46514

Dear Mr. Liegl:

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 Forest River, Inc., were among those tested by CDC that had "significantly higher levels of formaldehyde" than other travel trailers.⁴ The results showed that 44% of the tested Forest River travel trailers had levels of formaldehyde

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/fematrailersfindings/pdf/interim_findings.pdf).

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* at 18.

⁴ *Id.* at 10.

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 documents related to communications between Forest River and FEMA regarding formaldehyde in the Forest River travel trailers sold to FEMA following the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005.
2. All communications between Forest River and any Forest River subcontractor regarding formaldehyde in the Forest River 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.
3. All other documents related to formaldehyde in Forest River travel trailers sold to FEMA following the Gulf Coast Hurricanes of 2005.
4. Documents sufficient to show (a) how many Forest River travel trailers have been sold in each of the last eight years, (b) how much revenue the sale of these travel trailers generated for Forest River 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 Forest River.
5. Documents sufficient to show the compensation provided to Forest River'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 *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 whether and, if so, how formaldehyde was used in the production of the Forest River travel trailers FEMA provided to victims of the Gulf Coast hurricanes of 2005.
7. Documents sufficient to show why Forest River 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.
8. Documents sufficient to show (a) what process, if any, Forest River 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.
9. Documents sufficient to show whether Forest River voluntarily followed the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's formaldehyde emission controls standard for wood products for manufactured homes for the Forest River travel trailers purchased by FEMA.
10. Documents sufficient to show whether Forest River 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.
11. Documents sufficient to show whether Forest River tests the indoor air concentrations of formaldehyde in its travel trailers and, if so, the results of these tests.
12. Documents sufficient to show (a) whether Forest River 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, Forest River's response to the complaints.
13. Documents sufficient to show (a) whether Forest River received complaints about formaldehyde or a strong odor from displaced residents of the Gulf Coast hurricanes living in FEMA-supplied Forest River travel trailers, (b) the number of complaints it received, and (c) its response to the complaints.
14. Documents sufficient to show (a) when Forest River first learned about the public health concerns related to the levels of formaldehyde in the Forest River travel trailers FEMA supplied to displaced residents of the Gulf Coast, (b) how it learned this information, and (c) Forest River's response to the information.
15. Documents sufficient to show what actions, if any, Forest River has taken in light of the elevated formaldehyde levels found in travel trailers it manufactured.

Mr. Peter Liegl
June 4, 2008
Page 4

Please provide the Committee with the requested documents by Wednesday, June 18, 2008.

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