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# CPSC MEETING LOG

1998 MAY 27 A 8:36

**Meeting Between:** Commissioner Thomas H. Moore and Peter Sparber,  
representative of the National Association  
of State Fire Marshals

**Date of Meeting:** May 20, 1998

**Meeting Topic:** Upholstered Furniture

**Log Entry By:** Dale R. Ray, EC *DR Ray*  
Project Mgr., Upholstered Furniture

**Attendees:** NASFM: Peter Sparber, Sparber & Associates

CPSC: Commissioner Thomas Moore  
Michael Gougisha, COTM  
Dale Ray, EC

Other Non-CPSC: John Krasny, Technical  
Consultant (formerly NIST)  
Phillip Wakelyn, Nat'l. Cotton Council  
Debi Richardson, Society of the  
Plastics Industry

## Summary:

This meeting was requested by Mr. Sparber to present NASFM's observations on the progress of CPSC's standards development activities regarding upholstered furniture flammability and on the May 5-6, 1998 CPSC public hearing on flame retardant (FR) chemical toxicity. Mr. Sparber outlined NASFM's position on these topics and discussed some related issues.

Mr. Sparber observed that, in his view:

--EPA's existing regulatory mechanisms and processes were adequate to protect the public from any chemical risks that might accompany FR treatments in upholstered furniture;

--the Fire Retardant Chemical Association's position appeared reasonable, and their attitude at the hearing and in discussions with NASFM has been positive and cooperative;

--the American Furniture Manufacturers Association presented no new information on the toxicity issue, and has generally displayed a non-cooperative attitude;

--no information was presented at the public hearing to raise concerns (including concerns about smoke toxicity) regarding FR chemical use in furniture;



--there was no response at the hearing from the many environmental activist groups that were notified or invited; and

--unnecessary delays would result in greater fire losses over time from small open flame and cigarette ignited furniture fires.

Mr. Sparber offered NASFM's continuing support for CPSC's activities in this area, and stated that he would work to provide the Commissioner with any information he might need to help in his favorable consideration of the matter. Mr. Sparber questioned whether the existing Upholstered Furniture Action Council voluntary program would adequately address flammability hazards, and stated that NASFM would continue to push for voluntary action independent of their encouragement of a proposed CPSC rule. Commissioner Moore expressed his continued desire to have broader public input and participation on the issue of a small open flame ignition standard for upholstered furniture.

Mr. Sparber also noted NASFM's interest in plastics flammability (in electrical appliances). He stated that his organization would continue to pursue improved standards in this area.

Mr. Sparber and Dr. Wakelyn engaged in some discussion of the technical feasibility of FR fabric systems; Dr. Wakelyn noted the textile industry's intention to file written comments in response to the Commission's public hearing notice. Dr. Wakelyn also noted that, if a rule were issued, the textile industry would likely rely on testing performed by chemical or fiber suppliers to establish compliance and to guard against the use of any FR treatments that might pose toxic hazards. While Commissioner Moore noted that a standard would have performance requirements (and would not require the use of any FR chemicals), Dr. Wakelyn reiterated that FR treatments would be the industry's most likely approach, and that FR treatments may not be economically feasible for some fabrics.