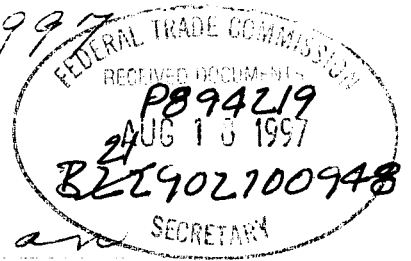


Aug 2, 1997



To whom it may concern:

This article was an enlightenment,

To think the government would try to dupe the people of U.S. further by changing this label.

The companies are already doing the people harm by going overseas and our children and grandchildren have to settle for \$5 an hour job because of this.

Where is the truth in advertising? Any other company has to have truth in advertising.

What twisted mind <sup>or reasoning</sup> some people have to get what they want.

We, my husband and I do not want this changed.

When he buys he always  
looks for 'Made in USA'.

Sincerely yours,

Mr. + Mrs. Louis Murtha  
2710 Rt 7  
Pierpont, Ohio 44082

# Definition of 'Made in the U.S.A.' may change

What does a "Made in the U.S.A." label mean to you?

A. A product was assembled in the United States. The parts were made in China.

B. Seventy-five percent of the parts and labor costs were incurred in the United States. However, women and children working in a sweatshop in Honduras assembled parts of the product. Because they are only paid one dollar per day, their costs amounted to less than 25 percent of the product.

C. All or Virtually "all" parts of this product were made in the United States and all labor needed to produce this product was performed in the United States.

Today the legally, correct answer is C, but the Federal Trade Commission is proposing to change the definition of "Made in the U.S.A." to include A and B. Their proposal will allow manufacturer to label a



LAURA YEOMANS

product made in the U.S.A. even if it was made with only 75 percent American parts or labor and 25 percent foreign parts and labor. Companies may also import foreign parts for assembly in an American factory. The end result "Made in the U.S.A." according to the proposal.

Richard Blumenthal, attorney general of Connecticut, and 20 other state attorneys general also oppose the Federal Trade Commission's plan. "Since the 1940s, the Federal Trade Commission has required that the U.S.A. label be restricted to products that are all or virtually all made by U.S. workers with U.S. component parts," Blumenthal said. "Made in the U.S.A. is a simple designation and easily understood. The FTC proposal would take that simple concept and turn it on its head, putting truth in advertising and American jobs at risk in the process."

"As the availability of truly U.S.A. products declines, the fact that a product is "Made in the U.S.A." becomes increasingly valuable to consumers who wish to buy American," wrote the attorney general in comments submitted to the

Commission. "The harm resulting from deceptive representations regarding a product's origin or domestic content is compounded by the fact that consumers have no way of verifying the origin of a product. Consumers who purchase a product based on the mistaken belief that the entire product is made in the U.S.A. will never realize that they were deceived."

Den Grossman is the project director for the changes proposed by the Federal Trade Commission's Division of Advertising Practices. She said the proposal will better define what "Made in the U.S.A." is. The Buy American Act which governs some government procurement requires that products be made 50 percent in the United States. The American Automobile Labelling Act allows a part that is 75 percent American made to be considered 100 per-

cent made in the U.S.A., Grossman said.

"We think that for a good primarily made here, if the company has a factory here, they are employing U.S. workers, they are making most of the parts in the U.S., there maybe some small amount of foreign content, it doesn't mean the good is not made in the U.S.A.," Grossman said.

Charlie Mercer, president of the Union Label and Service Trades Department of the AFL-CIO believes the Commission's proposal would harm businesses in the United States who have invested here and maintained workers here in order to have a "Made in the U.S.A." label on their products. Companies who export some of the tasks needed to produce a product will compete unfairly with companies that have all the labor costs in "the United States."

"There are no labor standards in many countries," Mercer said. "Products may be made by child labor, prison labor and people making 35 cents an hour. When you buy U.S.A. you're at least 99 percent sure the working conditions are decent, that workers have some benefits and make at least minimum wage."

The Federal Trade Commission is accepting public comments on this proposal until Aug. 11. Write to Made in USA Policy Comment, Office of the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, Room 159, Sixth and Pennsylvania Ave. NW, Washington, D.C. 20580.

Laura Yeomans is the research director for Ohio Citizen Action. Write to her at P.O. Box 8, Dower, OH 44622-0008 or lyeomans@bright.net. Please include your phone number and a self-addressed stamped envelope. Yeomans reserves the right to edit and print letters.