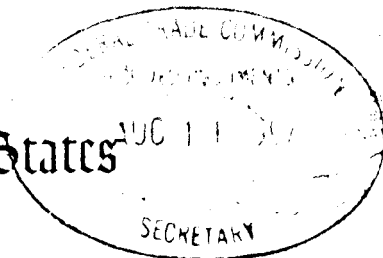


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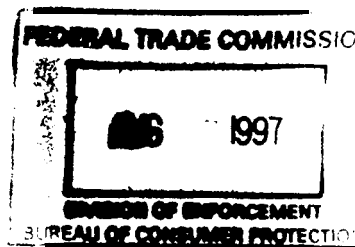
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Congress of the United States  
 House of Representatives  
 Washington, DC 20515-2304



July 24, 1997



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 FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Commissioner Roscoe B. Starek, III  
 Federal Trade Commission  
 Sixth and Pennsylvania Ave., NW  
 Washington, D.C. 20580

Dear Commissioner:

I am writing to express my firm opposition to the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) proposal to liberalize the requirements of the Made in USA label. I disagree and much regret the conclusion of the FTC that the Made in USA label has outlived its intended purpose in today's global marketplace. This seems a convenient rouse to undercut and erode the meaning, intent, and purpose of the Made in USA label!

The decline of America's manufacturing base and the difficulty of ascertaining a product's origin in the global marketplace, has in fact rendered the Made in USA claim more valuable and significant to American consumers wishing to buy American. In such an environment, it becomes more important for the Made in USA claim to be reserved only for those products with all or virtually all American content and labor.

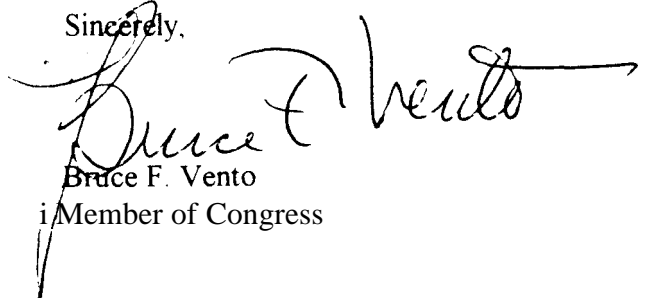
The substantial sales benefits of the Made in USA standard serve as a **powerful** incentive to counterbalance the clear economic benefits of producing abroad. Liberalization and erosion of the standard not only encourages the flight of U. S. production, but also places American manufacturers committed to domestic industry at an unfair disadvantage by depriving them of a selling tool that allows them to distinguish themselves from manufacturers with a lower domestic content. American workers, however, lose the most under the new proposed regulations: first as consumers that expect accurate information in advertising and second as workers whose economic security is compromised.

The primary mission of the FTC is to prohibit unfair or deceptive trade practices, not to grant manufacturers increased flexibility to comply with regulations. Permitting items with significant foreign content to carry the Made in USA claim is at odds with consumer expectations of quality and the assurance that it benefits business and employment in the United States. Strict labeling, on the other hand, permits consumers to make sound judgments concerning social, political, environmental, labor, and other factors involved in foreign manufacturing. As a **result**, consumer awareness and decisions may be exercised regarding value, quality, and other relevant information prior to and at the point of purchase. In sharp contrast, the revised label misleads consumers into concluding that the manufacturer contributes more to the American economy than

is actually the case. The endorsement of such misleading labeling stands in direct contradiction of the agency's goal to create informed customers.

As you finalize your decisions for the Made in USA regulations, I urge that you consider my views. I hope that your commitment and obligation to protect consumers from deceptive trade practices will persuade you to maintain the current standard for making unqualified Made *in* USA claims.

Sincerely,



Bruce F. Vento  
Member of Congress

BFV:jc