

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

May 6, 2009

The Honorable David R. Obey
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-218 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jerry Lewis
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Obey and Ranking Member Lewis:

As the Committee reviews President Obama's Fiscal Year 2009 Supplemental Appropriations request, we write to ask your consideration for the inclusion of emergency funding that will allow the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), in conjunction with other federal agencies, to conduct a comprehensive investigation into the health and safety impacts of faulty Chinese-made drywall on thousands of American consumers.

Since 2006, more than 550 million pounds of drywall have been imported into the United States from China. In the last 18 months, countless homeowners throughout the Gulf Coast region have reported noxious fumes and serious metal corrosion in air conditioning units, copper pipes and electrical wiring. In addition, a number of homeowners have also reported serious health issues that appear to be related to the drywall, including bloody noses, headaches, insomnia, and skin irritation. In total, the CPSC has received over 180 incident reports from 12 states and the District of Columbia, demonstrating that this is a problem not just on the Gulf Coast, but also a threat to homeowners across the country.

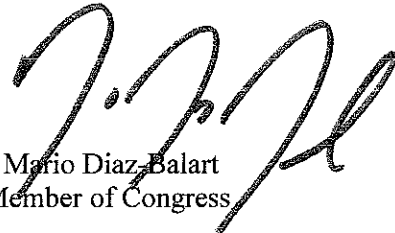
Preliminary testing has confirmed that the imported drywall is at the root of the problem, but these tests have not been able to pinpoint the problem substances in the drywall. With this in mind, we respectfully request that the Committee include \$2 million for the CPSC to fully investigate and evaluate the defective drywall. These funds would be used to do field studies, analyze the substances in the product and, most importantly, expedite lab results to provide clarity to impacted homeowners. Such tests would allow the Federal government to fully understand the scope of the health and public safety risks posed by this product. Funds would also allow the agency to set up a public information campaign on defective drywall, including a website and hotline to help consumers.

Attached, for your review, is a full breakdown of how these funds would be allocated within the CPSC. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



Robert Wexler
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

Attachment

Estimated Chinese Drywall Investigation 2009 CPSC Costs

Drywall Elemental Analysis:	
Potential reimbursement of EPA's Emergency Response Team (ERT) Lab	\$175,000
Drywall Chamber Emissions Study:	
Government Laboratory:	
Start-up Costs and running of Phase I	\$310,000
Phase II	\$300,000
Additional equipment to expedite lab studies:	
Gas Chromatograph/Mass Spectrometer	\$250,000
Additional pre-conditioning chambers	\$ 10,000
Field Study (in-Home monitoring) – Contractor	\$500,000
Component Metallurgic Analysis:	
Government Lab – Electrical/Gas Components	\$ 30,000
TBD Laboratory – Fire Protection Components	\$ 60,000
Component Advanced Aging Analysis	\$ 70,000
Functional Evaluation of Fire Protection Components	\$ 40,000
Shipping Costs – Samples in Tedlar Bags to Lab, EPA	\$ 1,000
Compliance Field Investigators (Two)	\$150,000
Public Information:	
Web site design and build	\$ 5,000
Automated e-mail response management system	\$ 40,000
Hotline operations, inquiry response, FAQs, regular website updates	\$ 60,000
Travel:	
To Lab, to oversee Phase I and Phase II studies, 2 trips	\$ 12,000
Visit to U.S. gypsum manufacturing plant, 1 trip (five staff)	\$ 8,000
To China, to visit manufacturing plants, 2 trips (up to six staff)	<u>\$ 66,000</u>
Total	\$2,087,000