

Opening Remarks
Chair Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Subcommittee on Innovation, Data, and Commerce Hearing:
“The Fiscal Year 2025 Consumer Product Safety Commission
Budget”
July 23, 2024

INTRO

Thank you, Chairman Bilirakis.

The last time CPSC appeared before this Committee was in 2019, so this hearing is long overdue.

I want to welcome back Chairman Hoehn-Saric [ho-en sahr-ic], who is an alumn of the Energy and Commerce Committee, the best Committee on Capitol Hill...

I also want to welcome back Commissioner Feldman—who is the only member to testify last time commissioners were in front of this committee...

...and I want to thank all of the other Commission members, along with the dedicated career staff, for their service and hard work to carry out the agency’s mission.

TAKING ACTION TO PROTECT AMERICANS

The Energy and Commerce Committee has been leading the way this Congress to advance bi-partisan solutions to protect the American people.

One of our top priorities for this Congress has been addressing the threat posed by the Chinese Communist Party.

We have advanced policies that protect the American people from questionable products coming from China...

...ranging from defective and unsafe products to those developed using forced labor or as a result of disturbing human rights abuses.

Now that CPSC is at full capacity with all of its commissioners, it's critical that the agency works to implement the important bipartisan legislation we've moved through this committee...

...especially efforts like the Safe Sleep for Babies Act, STURDY Act, and Reese's Law, which have had the strong backing of Ranking Member Schakowsky, someone with a long track record on these issues.

We've also advanced bipartisan legislation to protect Americans from hazardous products ranging from home awnings, to faulty lithium-ion batteries, to dangerous chemicals available online.

I look forward to working together to get those pieces of legislation signed into law as soon as possible and to continue to work in a bi-partisan way to protect the American people.

KEY EFFORTS UNDERWAY AT CPSC

The CPSC has also been hard at work.

I was pleased to see the agency prioritize the hiring of a Chief Technology Officer and Chief Data Officer to modernize the agency's capabilities.

I hope this leads to better efficiency and protection of the agency's data than what we have seen in the past.

These roles should also help the agency use their resources effectively and oversee the increased use of AI and machine learning to efficiently and accurately target hazardous products entering the country.

I am also glad that the children's product defect team has been reinstated, though it is still unclear to me why it was discontinued in the first place.

Certainly, the most important action the Commission can take is to help strengthen protections for children.

MORE WORK TO BE DONE

While there have been many successes this Congress here at the Committee and at the Commission, there are still many areas where the CPSC needs to improve its operations, especially as we consider the agency's budget.

Under the leadership of the previous two acting Chairs, the Commission fell into disrepair.

Since the last time we had you all here, CPSC experienced a massive a data breach of all confidential incident data held by the Commission...

...imposed a six-month COVID-19 pandemic closure of port inspections...

...shuttered CPSC lab testing in support of enforcement and the development of the STURDY rule...

...accumulated around 200 open inspector general recommendations and reports showing a culture of mismanagement of agency funds....

...and has started to stray from its core mission in pursuit of a more politicized agenda...with initiatives like a rule to ban gas stoves in the name of consumer protection...when it is clearly just a backdoor attempt to advance the current administration's radical green agenda.

More troubling still are the claims from your own inspector general that his independence was under attack.

While many of the IG's recommendations have been closed out related to these specific incidents, the Commissioners need to ensure a culture at the agency that respects the IG's independence.

CLOSING

The CPSC plays an important role in helping to protect the American people from dangerous products.

The agency is at its best when it is fulfilling its core mission, through enhancing security at our ports, protecting our kids, and ensuring companies are in compliance with the law.

I look forward to discussing how to best ensure CPSC is adhering to its core mission and how we can continue to work together to keep the American people safe.

Thank you, I yield back.