



January 13, 2026

The Honorable Jim Jordan  
Chairman  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on the Judiciary  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Jordan and Ranking Member Raskin:

On behalf of the American Public Health Association, a diverse community of public health professionals that champion the health of all people and communities, I write to express our opposition to H.R. 5437, the Protection of Lawful Commerce in Stone Slab Products Act.

In 2019, public health officials in California, Colorado, Texas, and Washington reported on cases of severe silicosis among stone fabrication workers.<sup>1</sup> Two of the individuals, ages 36 and 38, died in 2018 from this incurable lung disease caused by exposure to respirable silica (quartz) dust. As of January 8, the Occupational Health Branch of the California Department of Public Health has confirmed 481 cases of silicosis among workers with exposure to engineered stone products (also known as “artificial stone”). At least 27 were known to have died, and 52 have undergone a lung transplant at very young ages.<sup>2,3</sup> Exposure to respirable silica is also associated with other lung diseases, autoimmune disorders, mycobacterial infections, renal disease and lung cancer.<sup>4</sup> The physical, emotional, and financial implications of having a silica-related disease are significant for both the individual and their family.

Stone fabrication workers, in particular those working with artificial stone slab products, can be exposed to exceedingly high concentrations of respirable silica. It contains up to 90% silica, to which resins, fillers, and pigments are added. The very high silica content, combined with the fabrication process of cutting, grinding, sanding, and polishing, exceeds the capacity of typical safety precautions used to protect workers from respirable silica dust. In 2024, Australia determined that engineered stone was an inherently dangerous product and banned the manufacture, supply and use of engineered benchtops, panels and slabs.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Rose C, Heinzerling A, Patel K, et al. Severe silicosis in engineered stone fabrication workers — California, Colorado, Texas, and Washington, 2017–2019. *MMWR Morb Mortal Wkly Rep* 2019;68:813–818. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm6838a1>.

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Public Health. Engineered Stone (ES) Silicosis Surveillance Dashboard. <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDC/PHP/DEODC/OHB/Pages/essdashboard.aspx>

<sup>3</sup> Flattery J, Woolsey C, Fazio, J C, Gandhi, S A, Heinzerlin A, Harrison RJ, Cummings K J. Silicosis Surveillance in California, 2019-2024: Tracking an Epidemic. *Am J Pub Health*. 2025;115(11): 1913–1921. <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2025.308225>,

<sup>4</sup> Fazio JC, Viragh K, Houlroyd J. et al. A review of silicosis and other silica-related diseases in the engineered stone countertop processing industry. *J Occup Med Toxicol*. 2025; 20, 9. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12995-025-00455-8>

<sup>5</sup> Commonwealth of Australia, Department of Employment and Workplace Regulations. (October 29, 2024). Prohibition on the use of engineered stone. <https://www.dewr.gov.au/engineeredstone>

If adopted, H.R. 5437 would bar workers who develop silica-related disease from seeking compensation from manufacturers and sellers of stone slab products. It would shield these companies from responsibility for the grave harm caused by their products. This includes supplying materials to fabrication shops, which are often small businesses that lack the resources or expertise to address the toxic dust generated by artificial stone slabs. These fabrication shops should not bear full responsibility for the silica-related illnesses and deaths associated from exposure to this hazardous product.

If H.R. 5437 becomes law, manufacturers of engineered stone slab products will have no incentive to substitute safer materials to protect the health and safety of U.S. workers. They will be shielded from civil action by those who develop silica-related diseases because controlling the silica dust generated during the fabrication process is exceedingly difficult, given the high silica content in these stone slab products. The fact that manufacturers of stone slab products are seeking immunity from Congress is an acknowledgement by these firms of the significant risk of harm to people who fabricate countertops and other goods from their products.

We urge members of Congress to oppose this legislation. To protect public health, we recommend the committee follow the lead of Australia and consider banning engineered benchtops, panels and slabs. Safer substitutes for engineered stone slabs are readily available. In Australia, these products cost the same or less than prohibited engineered stone slab products, resulting in no economic impact to the fabricator or consumer.<sup>6</sup>

Thank you for considering our views on this legislation and its impact on worker health.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Georges C. Benjamin". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Georges" and last name "Benjamin" clearly legible.

Georges C. Benjamin, MD  
Executive Director

---

<sup>6</sup> Robert Harrison, MD, MPH. Safer substitutes for engineered stone. Testimony before the California Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board, December 18, 2025.