



PPG INDUSTRIES, INC./ONE GATEWAY CENTER/PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15222/AREA 612/434-3719

December 27, 1971

ELMER C. LARSEN, Vice President
General Manager, Coatings and Resins Division

Hearing Clerk
Department of Health, Education and Welfare
Room 6 - 88
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Md. 20852

Gentlemen:

PPG is aware of Representative Ryan's petition to the FDA which proposes that lead in paint products be reduced to "trace" amounts; that paints containing greater than "trace" amounts of lead be banned as hazardous substances. It is further understood that the intent of this petition is to supplant the position of the National Paint and Coatings Association and the current FDA opinion which is, that lead should be controlled to 0.5 percent in the dried paint film. We strongly object to Representative Ryan's position from both a manufacturing and an environmental health standpoint, especially in view of the fact that his petition is directed to all coatings rather than to coatings applied to surfaces accessible to children.

With respect to manufacturing, it is important to note that Congressman Ryan's proposal would result in a regulation with which we could not comply because the term "trace" has not been defined in a quantitative manner. Assuming the term "trace" were defined at a level such as 0.06 percent lead by weight in the dried paint film as suggested by Dr. Chisholm of the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is still unreasonable to expect that we could consistently produce useful commercial decorative and protective coatings for the following reasons: (1) At present, the state of coatings technology does not permit reformulation of all coatings to essentially lead-free products; (2) our suppliers will not guarantee the lead content of pigments, driers, oils, resins, and inert raw materials; and (3) providing that essentially lead-free coatings could be formulated, this would necessitate the analysis of each completed batch of product in the manner and accuracy of a pharmaceutical product--a patently impossible procedure.

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- 2 -

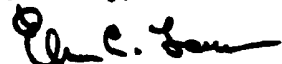
As far as environmental health is concerned, EPG's medical and environmental personnel have reviewed the evidence upon which Congressman Ryan and others have based their recommendations. The basic intent of protecting children, two generations removed, by considering multiple layers of lead-containing paint and relating this to the human metabolic capacity to absorb and eliminate lead, is well-founded. However, the assumption upon which the rationale is based may well be in error and certainly cannot be supported by any type of analytical experience. This assumption, which is based on the work of Dr. Robert Kahoe of the Kettering Laboratory, University of Cincinnati, holds that the various lead compounds contained in the dried paint film are absorbed by the human body exactly as a water solution of lead acetate taken with meals would be absorbed. This type of extrapolation is not valid and is quite unacceptable in the scientific community, especially in matters of human toxicology and the public health.

It is also important to know that at this time there is no epidemiological evidence to indicate that lead at a level as high as one percent by weight in the dry paint film has resulted in lead poisoning in children. The well-documented cases involve ingestion of paint produced prior to World War II when the major pigments used in formulating paint were lead compounds such as white lead and lithopone. These paint products had lead content in the dried film as high as 15 percent. These pigments are no longer in use and have been replaced by titanium dioxide.

Since there is no evidence that paint products with lead content as high as one percent in the dried film are hazardous to humans, there is no legal basis for declaring that paint containing more than traces of lead be banned as hazardous substances.

We therefore respectfully request that through the office of the National Paint and Coatings Association, 1500 Rhode Island Avenue, N.W., Washington, D. C. 20005, responsible experts be contacted for two purposes: First, to comment on Congressman Ryan's basic assumption; and second, to conduct the type of study that will provide the proper scientific evidence upon which to finalize on a lead value in the dried paint film at a level which will not be a source of concern to future generations.

Sincerely,



Elmer C. Larsen

cc: R. A. Roland - NPCA
D. Ring - NPCA
R. A. Brown - NPCA

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