

Nevertheless, the proposal would have a significant impact on each of our companies, and we believe that it will be useful for the EPA to have our perspective on the proposed regulation.

We support the EPA's desire to eliminate asbestos from the marketplace. In our testimony today we will discuss why we have reached this conclusion, and provide alternate suggestions as to how this goal can be met for gaskets.

It might be useful initially for us to provide some background information about why we are testifying as a group. Some two years ago, it became evident during informal conversations at various industry meetings that each of our companies was concerned about the use of asbestos in our products. While we have no evidence whatsoever that the use of asbestos in automotive gaskets has ever caused health problems either in our own workplaces or among persons who work with motor vehicles, our companies independently had reached the conclusion that the use of asbestos should be eliminated. There were two reasons for this conclusion. First, asbestos had obviously become a societal concern, and we therefore felt a social responsibility to deal with its use. Second, we recognized that the failure to deal with this issue could, in the longer run, lead to worker dissatisfaction and increasing litigation for which liability insurance will be prohibitively expensive or unavailable.