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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

June 15, 2010

Mr. Ralph Vasami
Executive Director
Window Covering Manufacturers
Association (WCMA)
355 Lexington Avenue 15th Floor
New York, New York 10017

Ms. Elena Santiago Cid
CEN-CENELEC Director General
Avenue Marnix, 17
1000 Brussels
Belgium

Mr. S. Joe Bhatia
President and CEO
American National Standards Institute
(ANSI)
1819 L Street, NW 6th floor
Washington, DC 20036

Ms. Bonnie Rose
President
CSA Standards
5060 Spectrum Way, Suite 100
Mississauga, ON, L4W 5N6

Dear Mr. Vasami, Mr. Bhatia, Ms. Santiago Cid, and Ms. Rose:

Corded window covering products cause strangulation deaths and significant injuries in children around the world. In the United States, the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) staff is aware of 120 fatalities and 113 non-fatal incidents related to corded window coverings that were reported to have occurred since 1999. Health Canada (HC) has received reports of 28 strangulation deaths and 23 near-strangulations linked to corded window covering products since 1986. In seven Member States of Europe, 90 children visited the emergency department for injuries caused by corded window coverings in 2002. More recently, three fatalities in the United Kingdom (two in 2010, one in 2008), one in the Netherlands (2009), and two in Ireland (one in 2009 and one in 2010) were reported.

The CPSC, Health Canada, and DG SANCO (Directorate General for Health and Consumers/European Commission) share a joint commitment to reduce the risk of death and injury that corded window covering products present to children. Although we have different mechanisms for ensuring adequate safety requirements in consumer products and are at different places in our work on corded window coverings, we are in agreement on the need for immediate action.

In addition to the efforts to promote public awareness campaigns and voluntary recall activities, a greater benefit will come from stronger standards that eliminate the risk factors causing child deaths and injuries. A harmonized and coordinated effort by our agencies and standards

development organizations will lead to a cost-effective product development, manufacturing, and sales process in a global economy while maintaining the highest level of safety for children.

Consumer health and safety is the mission shared by our agencies. We will continue to support and enhance our collaboration with standards development organizations by providing available epidemiological data and expertise, describing hazard scenarios, and identifying specific risks of injury associated with the corded window coverings.

We strongly support a **swift** and **comprehensive** process that **concurrently** eliminates the risk factors causing deaths and injuries from all types of corded window covering products.

We appreciate the response that standards development organizations and manufacturers in our geographic markets have already provided to address this serious risk and we encourage them to continue working in a coordinated effort towards this goal.



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