

LOG OF MEETING

DATE: May 25, 2011

LOCATION: CPSC, 4330 East West Highway, Bethesda MD 20814

SUBJECT: Table Saw Safety

ATTENDEES: Sally Greenberg, National Consumers League; Terry and Curtis Harper, Consumers; Courtney and Adam Thull, Consumers; Stephen Gass and David Fanning, SawStop

OBSERVERS: Ed Krenik, Bracewell & Guiliani

CPSC ATTENDEES: Robert Adler, Commissioner; Jason Levine, Legal Counsel to Commissioner Adler; Jana Fong-Swamidoss, Legal Counsel to Commissioner Adler

MEETING SUMMARY: The meeting began with a short presentation by Ms. Greenberg regarding the history of the table safety saw issue at the Commission, beginning with a petition by Mr. Gass in 2003. Ms. Greenberg stated that National Consumers League had requested this meeting to advocate for a national mandatory standard on table saw safety.

Mr. Thull then described the injury that he had suffered while working on a table saw in his home workshop. The injury, which has deprived Mr. Thull of motor skills in his right arm and resulted in multiple surgeries, has forced Mr. Thull out of work and onto government assistance. At the time of the injury Mr. Thull said that he was not using the blade-guard (or "guard") that was issued with the table saw because its use so slowed his work that it made the work almost impossible to accomplish in a timely fashion. Mr. Thull added that he often did not use the guard because it was not useful in terms of active woodworking. Mr. Thull stated that the guard that was on the saw he was using during his injury met the current voluntary standard.

Mr. Harper then described two separate injuries he had suffered on a table saw in his own home. The more recent injury, which occurred while Mr. Harper was

working on a home improvement project, resulted in the loss of a finger. During this injury the guard that was issued with the table saw had been removed, because Mr. Harper believed it was more dangerous to risk the kickback that could be created from the use of the guard, than to use the guard. Mr. Harper had reached this conclusion because he previously experienced an injury that almost cost him the use of his thumb with the guard on the table saw. He believed the kickback that caused the first injury was a result of using the manufacturer-installed guard.

Both Mr. Harper and Mr. Thull, who have spent time using table saws professionally, stated that neither manufacturer-installed nor after-market guards allowed for full functionality of a table saw and provided protection only 50% of the time at most. While both men were aware of SawStop's technology, both stated that they were not there to endorse it, only to ask for some technology to provide better protection for table saw users than was currently available. Mr. Harper concluded by noting that his biggest concern was that the small saw sold at large home improvement stores generally has the flimsiest protections and is used by the least experienced consumer.

Commissioner Adler thanked both men for sharing their stories and agreed that table saws do present a real safety hazard. He stated that he was also not a champion for SawStop, but that he is interested in improving table saw safety as much as is technologically feasible at a cost that did not make the product essentially unattainable. He explained that the Commission is required in this type of rulemaking process to undertake a cost/benefit analysis.

Ms. Greenberg said that she understood this restriction, but also believed that safety should not be only for those that can afford it. She then asked the Commissioner what he thought was next in terms of Commission action.

Commissioner Adler stated that he believed this was a very important project, of the type that the CPSC was created to take on and he, speaking as only one Commissioner, was in favor of quickly moving to an

Advance Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in order to receive public feedback on the issue. He noted that all the Commissioners were equally concerned about consumer injuries and that this issue, in part because of the patents held by Mr. Gass, was a particularly thorny one. Finally, Commissioner Adler thanked everyone for traveling to the Commission and encouraged everyone to participate on the record, should a formal rulemaking process commence.

LOG AUTHOR: Jason Levine

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