NAFRA RESPONDS TO ENACTMENT OF MARYLAND FLAME RETARDANT LEGISLATION

WASHINGTON (May 8, 2020) – The American Chemistry Council’s (ACC) North American Flame Retardant Alliance (NAFRA) issued the following statement in response to enactment of SB 447 in Maryland that will take effect in 2021 and restricts the use of flame retardant materials in certain furniture and juvenile products.

“ACC’s NAFRA supports the transparent regulation of flame retardants that ensures both fire protection and chemical safety. Fire safety is a critical public health issue and flame retardants are an important tool to help reduce fires, fire deaths, and property damage. The policy framework in SB 447 is overly broad, runs contrary to science and previous decisions of regulatory authorities, undermines innovation, and may increase fire risk.

“Fire statistics data collected by the U.S. Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) clearly show fires involving furniture cause more death and destruction than any other fire scenario. According to the most recently available data, fires beginning with upholstered furniture account for 18% of home fire deaths.¹

“Flame retardants provide an important layer of fire protection that helps save lives and property by affecting overall fire conditions, including ignition development, smoke generation, escape time, and time available for emergency personnel response.²

“Fires have dropped significantly over the past 40 years, and a major contributor to the decline in fires and fire deaths since the 1970s has been the development of a comprehensive set of fire safety measures that include flame retardants. The use of flame retardants is especially important today, as the use of potentially flammable materials has increased dramatically in our homes, offices, and transportation over recent decades.

“Product manufacturers include specific flame retardants in their products based on the product’s attributes, properties, use, and potential ignition threats to meet product safety standards and

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reduce the risk of fire to consumers. SB 447 limits the tools product manufacturers have available to improve product performance and keep consumers safe.

“While the legislation continues to provide for the continued use of flame retardants in critical uses where needed, it overreaches and inappropriately restricts the use of critical materials that have been evaluated for their safety by government regulators around the globe as well as new, safe, innovative materials that could be developed in the future.

“Safety is a top priority for our industry, and we believe consumers deserve to have confidence that the products they buy are safe. We invest significant resources in product and environmental stewardship and share a common commitment to advancing the safe and secure management of the products we produce and sell. SB 447 fails to consider overall product safety and the important role flame retardants can play in protecting consumers from a variety of hazards.”


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The American Chemistry Council (ACC) represents the leading companies engaged in the business of chemistry. ACC members apply the science of chemistry to make innovative products and services that make people’s lives better, healthier and safer. ACC is committed to improved environmental, health and safety performance through Responsible Care®, common sense advocacy designed to address major public policy issues; and health and environmental research and product testing. The business of chemistry is a $553 billion enterprise and a key element of the nation’s economy. It is among the largest exporters in the nation, accounting for ten percent of all U.S. goods exports. Chemistry companies are among the largest investors in research and development. Safety and security have always been primary concerns of ACC members, and they have intensified their efforts, working closely with government agencies to improve security and to defend against any threat to the nation’s critical infrastructure.