



February 2, 2012

Secretary Donald S. Clark
Federal Trade Commission
600 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington DC, 20580

RE: Textile Rules, 16 CFR Part 303, Project No. P948404

Dear Mr. Clark:

This is a response on behalf of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA), the American Fiber Manufacturers Association, Inc. (AFMA), American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC), the Canadian Apparel Federation (CAF), the National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), the National Retail Federation (NRF), the National Textile Association (NTA), and the U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel (USA-ITA) to the Federal Trade Commission's Federal Register Notice published November 7, 2011 requesting comments for use in the Commission's review of Rules and Regulations Under the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act ("Textile Fiber Rules"). The combined membership of our associations comprises the entire U.S. supply/retail chain for products covered by the Commission's Textile Fiber Rules.

We respectfully submit the following comments for consideration by the Commission:

Section 303.7 "Generic Names and Definitions for Manufactured Fibers of the Commission's Textile Fiber Rules" should be updated to reflect the most recent version adopted by the International Standards Organization: ISO 2076:2010

The Commission's Federal Register Notice specifically requests a response on this question. We strongly recommend amendment of the Textile Fiber Rules to incorporate changes in the international standard as published in ISO 2076:2010.

We support the widest possible international consensus on generic fiber names and their worldwide administration. The use of generic fiber names that are established on universal science-based terminology facilitates this international consensus by sidestepping divisive debates linked to national language preferences. The entire supply chain benefits when

unnecessary barriers to trade are removed from the equation and the timely adoption of consensus updates by the Commission would do just that.

Fiber performance related hang tags, and other non-permanently affixed point-of-sale information, should be held to “non-deceptive” requirements, but not to regulatory mandates requiring information unavailable to fiber producers

The use of permanent content and care labels on apparel sold in the United States is beneficial to consumers, manufacturers, and business in general as it allows for the necessary flow of information along the commodity chain.

Conversely, requiring the same information to appear on hang tags is both unnecessary for consumers and improbable from a manufacturing standpoint. One major purpose of attaching hang tags is to provide important information to purchasers at the point-of-sale that describes significant performance characteristics attributed to the product. However, the current Textile Fiber Rules present such an unachievable challenge to fiber producers that it inhibits their ability to relay the valuable information to consumers.

Much of the information mandated by the current Rules typically is only available at the assembly end of the supply chain, notably generic fiber blends and their percentages. When creating fiber-related performance hang tag programs intended for wide use producers typically cannot know end product fiber percentages. In some cases even the identity of generic fibers in applicable end products will be unknown. In contemporary supply lines these choices typically are made downstream by fabric manufacturers and apparel assemblers. The requirement in the Commission’s existing labeling rules to provide precise identification of these unknowns wherever a fiber trademark appears imposes an extraordinary burden on fiber manufacturers as they seek to provide important performance information to consumers at the point-of-sale.

Continuing innovation in the U.S. manufactured fiber sector greatly has expanded consumer choice for many significant performance characteristics. In these cases, point-of-sale information can facilitate more informed consumer decisions. Illustrative examples of categories of trademarks in today’s markets that include more than one generic fiber, as well as effectiveness across a wide range of percentages and blends, include:

- **STRETCH**
Elastomerics, even in minor amounts, can impart dramatic improvements in yarn, fabric and product performance.
- **RECYCLED CONTENT**
Recycled proportions are important facts for many consumers. Related trademarks may cover a variety of generic fibers.
- **UV PROTECTION**
Ultraviolet light protection incorporated in fiber manufacturing will be effective across ranges of individual generic fibers selected downstream
- **MOISTURE MANAGEMENT**
This property of importance to many consumers can be imparted effectively to a wide range of generic fibers.
- **ANTIMICROBIAL PROPERTIES**
Bacterial management for health and odor control can be covered by fiber trademarks independent of the specific fiber used in a given application.

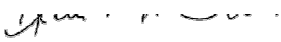
The examples cited are illustrative. All relate to performance characteristics of importance to some consumers. Rules that require their fiber trademarks to be accompanied by information not available at the time hang tag programs are designed and printed effectively disables useful consumer point-of-sale information programs.

As a response to the burgeoning innovation in fiber performance, we recommend (1) continuing the requirement for permanently affixed labels that relay generic fiber identification and percentages under the current Rules, and (2) eliminating the mandated duplicative information on hang tags and other point-of-sale material informing consumers about significant performance attributes. We believe it would serve consumers well to limit regulation of these latter materials to traditional “non-deceptive” guidelines, including a requirement for a factual basis for claims made.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important issue. We look forward to working with the Commission on finding a positive solution. For any questions or additional information please contact oday@afma.org or mdavignon@wewear.org.

Sincerely,

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