



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

July 8, 2013

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

Dear Mr. Clark:

This response to the Federal Trade Commission's Federal Register Notice published May 20, 2013 requesting comments on the Commission's proposed amendments to its Rules and Regulations Under the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act is submitted on behalf of the American Apparel and Footwear Association (AAFA), the American Fiber Manufacturers Association, Inc. (AFMA), the Canadian Apparel Federation (CAF), the National Council of Textile Organizations (NCTO), the National Retail Federation (NRF), the U.S. Association of Importers of Textiles and Apparel (USA-ITA), and the Retail Industry Leaders Association (RILA).

As with our previous filing dated February 2, 2012, the combined membership of our associations comprises the entire U.S. supply/retail chain for products covered by the Commission's Textile Fiber Rules. Of note since our prior filing, two signatories, the American Manufacturing Trade Action Coalition (AMTAC), and the National Textile Association (NTA), have merged with a third signatory, the National Council of Trade

Organizations (NCTO). Also, the Retail Industry leaders Association (RILA) has joined in this filing.

We appreciate the Commission's consideration of our previous comments and reassert our support for the Textile Rules as a benefit to consumers and businesses serving the sector.

In addition to our general support for the Rules, we respectfully submit the following comments for consideration by the Commission:

#### Updated ISO Standard for Man-Made Fiber Names

Our previous comments supported the Commission's use of the revised international standard for man-made fiber names, now ISO2076: 2010(E). The decision to adopt this updated ISO standard adds clarity and affords significant efficiencies in the relevant trade.

In response to the Commission's request for comment on definitional differences between section 303.7 and the revised ISO standard we do not anticipate problems should the Commission adopt the ISO alternatives on these technical matters.

#### Disclosure Requirements Applicable To Hang-Tags and Advertisements

We commend the Commission's decision to amend the Rules to accommodate the specific concerns raised in our February 2, 2012 filing. Revising section 303.17(b) as described by the Commission is a reasonable alternative to the commercial inflexibility imposed by the existing standard. The updated Rule affords consumer access to important performance information at the point-of-sale.

The Commission's accompanying proposed amendment to section 303.17(b) requiring explicit notice that the hang tag does not contain full fiber content information will assure consumers have access to the full array of relevant facts.

## Response to Questions

Our responses to specific questions posed by the Commission follow:

1. *General Questions on Amendments: To maximize the benefits and minimize the costs for buyers and sellers (including small businesses), the Commission seeks views and data on the following general questions for each of the proposed changes described in this NPRM:*

- (A) *What benefits would a proposed change confer and on whom? The Commission in particular seeks information on any benefits a change would confer on consumers of textile fiber products.*

Rule amendments standardizing fiber names and eliminating hang tag fiber percentages enable consistent availability of significant information for consumers at point-of-sale.

On fiber performance, the growing array of innovative properties include important purchase determinants like stretch, moisture management, UV protection, recycle, and antimicrobial properties. More will follow.

- (B) *What costs or burdens would a proposed change impose and on whom? The Commission in particular seeks information on any burdens a change would impose on small businesses.*

The ISO standard and hang tag amendments discussed above afford efficiency and reduce costs associated with providing significant performance information to consumers. This applies to textile supply chain firms from fiber producers to retailers, large and small.

- (C) *What regulatory alternatives to the proposed changes are available that would reduce the burdens of the proposed changes while providing the same benefits?*

To the best of our knowledge, no new alternatives beyond current Commission requirements are pertinent, nor called for. The Commission's over-riding principle on non-deception in advertising and other practices governs the field. We believe this provides sufficient regulatory oversight to assure protection of consumer interests.

The existing mandate to garment producers under the Commission's Rules requiring specific fiber, origin, and care information on permanent labels assures ready availability of the basic facts of interest to consumers at point-of-sale, and in subsequent use.

*(D) What evidence supports your answers?*

No organized evidence currently available.

## *2. Hang-tags and Fiber Content Disclosures:*

*(A) Would the proposed amendment to section 303.17 allowing hang-tags without full fiber content disclosures under certain circumstances affect the extent to which consumers become informed about the full fiber content of textile fiber products? If so, how?*

We believe the Commission's requirement to indicate clearly on hang-tags not containing full fiber percentages a notice to consumers that this is the case is an effective resolution of this matter. Hang-tags become positioned to provide consumers with important point-of-sale performance information, but only with an accompanying notice that full fiber percentage information is available elsewhere in a standard location on the product.

*(B) Would the proposed disclosure requirements for hang-tags not disclosing full fiber content (i.e., "This tag does not disclose the product's full fiber content" or "See other label for the product's full fiber content") prevent deception or confusion regarding fiber content? If so, how? Should the Commission provide different or additional examples of the required hangtag disclosures? If so, what?*

We believe the Commission's proposed requirement for a consumer alert regarding non-availability of fiber percentage information on hang-tags designed for other useful purposes is an appropriate and useful action. As the Commission's proposal recognizes, this alert usefully may take many forms effectively to communicate that message. Here again, the Commission's overarching proscription against deceptive practices governs individual situations.

*(C) What evidence supports your answers?*

No organized evidence presently available .

In summary, thank you for the opportunity to comment on these important issues. We would be pleased to add to this response. For questions or additional information please contact [oday@afma.org](mailto:oday@afma.org) or [mdavignon@wewear.org](mailto:mdavignon@wewear.org).

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