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Washington, DC – The US fashion jewelry industry today urged the adoption of a tough, science-based national lead safety standard for children’s jewelry.

In testimony prepared for the House Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection, Fashion Jewelry Trade Association (FJTA) Executive Director Michael Gale asked that the government embrace the lead content safety standard currently recommended by the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and prescribed by California law in 2006.

Based on extensive scientific research, that standard sets a limit of no more than .06 percent, or six parts lead in every 10,000 parts, for any component going into children’s jewelry, or 175 micrograms of accessible lead. Platings on children’s jewelry, such as nickel, silver and gold, block a child’s access to any lead in the product’s base metal.

Gale also strongly advocated that the national standard be preemptive, thus superseding state or local laws. He explained that this assures safety, as the California and CPSC standard is science-based, and practicality. Manufacturers need to know what standards apply and suppliers and national retailers “supply their stores from central warehouses. Their inventory cannot be segregated by state or city.”

Addressing the main topic of the hearing, “Protecting Children from Lead-Tainted Imports,” Gale outlined an aggressive industry program to bring foreign manufacturers into compliance with his industry’s lead safety standards, which he hopes to see mandated nationally. So far this year, industry representatives have met with Chinese government officials, and the Hong King Trade Development Council; conducted a compliance forum at a large international trade show; and are working with an international testing agency to make jewelry component testing more cost-efficient.

Gale concluded his testimony by stating “Our industry needs a national risk-based standard, one that cannot be preempted by any state or local law or regulation, if we are to maintain our competitiveness in the global marketplace, assure that compliant materials are available throughout our international supply chain, and maximize our industry’s ability to protect consumers, especially children.”

For full text of the statement, go to FJTA@aol.com and click on “News Articles.”