

March 18, 2010

The Honorable Bobby L. Rush
Chairman
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ed Whitfield
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection
House Committee on Energy and Commerce
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rush and Ranking Member Whitfield:

On behalf of First Alert, a trusted name in consumer home safety products and a leading manufacturer of carbon monoxide detection and notification devices, I am writing to formally convey our company's support for the Residential Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act (H.R. 1796), introduced by Representative Jim Matheson. We join Representative Matheson and the National Electrical Manufacturers Association (NEMA) in their concerns for protecting and preserving human lives and in their confidence that carbon monoxide alarms installed in residential dwellings, and other places where people sleep, provide an effective way to reduce the incidence of CO poisoning.

Each year, we receive hundreds of calls, letters and emails from individuals and families whose lives have been saved by our carbon monoxide alarms. Still, CO continues to be the number one cause of accidental poisoning in the United States, claiming nearly 400 lives each year and driving tens of thousands of others to seek medical attention (American Medical Association). In far too many cases, these incidences could have been prevented with proper detection and notification devices.

Last year, we conducted two nationwide surveys* related to the consumer use and replacement of residential carbon monoxide alarms. The findings were alarming. Nearly half of Americans (47 percent) do not have CO alarms in their homes. Equally disturbing is the fact that nearly a quarter (23 percent) of those who do have CO alarms at home have never replaced them, and five percent haven't replaced their CO alarm(s) in more than five years, the recommended replacement timeframe.

We are greatly encouraged by the numerous states and municipalities that have enacted legislation requiring CO alarms in residential dwellings. We also are grateful for

legislators like yourself and Representative Matheson who are working hard to gain federal support to protect all Americans from the dangers that CO poses in homes.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is a threat to everyone. However, we believe bills like the Residential Carbon Monoxide Poisoning Prevention Act coupled with education and awareness will help to reduce the number of accidental poisonings from this “silent killer.” We enthusiastically support H.R. 1796 and thank you for your attention to this life-threatening issue.

Sincerely,

Mark Devine
Vice President, Retail Marketing
First Alert

cc: The Honorable Jim Matheson

**The First Alert survey results are based on the responses of 1,000 adults in the United States who answered telephone surveys conducted Jan. 29 through Feb. 1, 2009 and July 31 through August 3, 2009. Results are accurate to +/-3 percent points with a 95 percent confidence level and can be generalized to the entire U.S. adult population.*