



U.S. Department  
of Transportation

**National Highway  
Traffic Safety  
Administration**

Administrator

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

February 4, 2016

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congressman Huffman:

Thank you for your letter requesting the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) evaluate the impacts of applying Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standard (FMVSS) No. 302, "Flammability of interior materials," to children's car seats. You express concern about possible health effects of chemical flame retardants on children and urge NHTSA to analyze the safety benefits of applying FMVSS No. 302 to children's car seats.

The U.S. Environment Protection Agency has an assessment program to help the industry find safe alternative flame retardant chemicals that can be used for flammability resistance. The program details are available at <http://www2.epa.gov/saferchoice/design-environment-alternatives-assessments>. In fact, FMVSS No. 302 does not specify the application of chemical flame retardants to vehicle and car seat materials. Instead, the FMVSS No. 302 flammability test is a performance-based test that evaluates the burn rate of materials in vehicles and on car seats.

NHTSA is initiating a two-year research program to evaluate potential improvements to FMVSS No. 302 to enhance the relevance, reproducibility, and objectivity of the standard. Thank you for raising this issue. In response to your request, the agency will consider expanding this research to materials used in child car seats. Additionally, the agency plans to evaluate the safety benefits of the standard as applied to children's car seats to more fully assess and possibly quantify child fatalities and injuries prevented by FMVSS No. 302.

Should you need further information or assistance, please feel free to contact me or Alison Pascale, Director, Office of Governmental Affairs, Policy and Strategic Planning, at (202) 366-1836.

Sincerely,

Mark R. Rosekind, Ph.D.