

Government Accountability Office – Presentation to Standards Alliance October 11, 2017



Who We Are

- **We're independent**
 - Non-partisan Congressional agency
- **We're the Watch Dog**
 - Investigate how the federal government spends taxpayers' money
- **Core values**
 - Accountability
 - Integrity
 - Reliability





Our organization provides Congress oversight, insight and foresight

- GAO provides Congress with oversight of federal programs, insight on ways to improve government, and foresight into long term trends
- We testify between 100 and 200 times per year at Congressional hearings.
- We make hundreds of recommendations every year
 - Improve governmental operations
 - Increase efficiency
 - Enhance effectiveness
- Our work comes mostly from legislative mandates and Congressional Member requests

Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act (2008)

Congress passed the Consumer Product Safety Improvement Act in 2008, in the wake of growing numbers of consumer product recalls, particularly of imported toys and children's products.

The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) is responsible for ensuring the safety of thousands of consumer products, including imports, after they enter the U.S. market.

Product Safety Oversight – U.S. Agencies

Numerous other federal agencies also play a role in product safety oversight, including:

- The Environmental Protection Agency
- The Food and Drug Administration
- The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
- The Nuclear Regulatory Commission
- The Department of Housing and Urban Development
- The U.S. Coast Guard
- The Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration



Consumer Product Safety Commission – GAO Reviews

Since 2009, GAO has reviewed numerous aspects of consumer product safety, including:

- The effectiveness of CPSC's authorities over imported products
- Actions needed to strengthen identification of potentially unsafe products
- Challenges facing CPSC in responding to new product risks.
- Federal oversight of consumer product safety



Consumer Product Safety Commission – GAO Recommendations

Some of GAO's recommendations to CPSC and to Congress include:

- CPSC should develop a long term plan for ensuring the safety of consumer products entering the U.S., including plans for international engagement
- CPSC should assume a more active, engaged role in voluntary product safety standards development

Consumer Product Safety Commission – Matters for Congressional Consideration

- Congress should consider amending the law to allow CPSC to enter into information-sharing agreements with its foreign counterparts.
- Congress should consider establishing a formal collaboration mechanism among federal agencies responsible for product safety, to address comprehensive oversight and inefficiencies.

Recently Published GAO Work on Trade Enforcement

- Customs and Border Protection: Improved Planning Needed to Strengthen Trade Enforcement (GAO-17-618)
 - CBP processed more than \$2.4 trillion in imports through more than 300 ports of entry, collecting around \$46 billion in revenue (2015 data)
 - CBP cannot assess the effectiveness of its activities without developing performance targets, and CBP generally has not met the minimum staffing levels set by Congress for certain positions
 - We recommended that CBP include performance targets in its plans covering high-risk issue areas, and develop a long-term hiring plan specific to trade positions that articulates how it will reach its staffing targets

Recently Published GAO Work on Trade Enforcement



Source: GAO. | GAO-17-618



Recently Published GAO Work on Trade Enforcement

- International Mail Security: Costs and Benefits of Using Electronic Data to Screen Mail Need to Be Assessed (GAO-17-606)
- Information on U.S. Agencies' Monitoring and Enforcement Resources for International Trade Agreements (GAO-17-399)
- Foreign Trade Zones: CBP Should Strengthen Its Ability to Assess and Respond to Compliance Risks across the Program (GAO-17-649)



Ongoing GAO Work Related to Intellectual Property Rights

- Request from Senate Finance Committee
- Looking at:
 - What is known about IP-infringing goods entering the United States?
 - What are CBP and ICE's roles in detecting and targeting potential IP-infringing shipments?
 - What efforts have CBP and ICE taken to address IP rights infringement at the border?
- Report tentatively expected to issue early 2018

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