

# IN MICHIGAN, IT'S NOT TRADE PROTECTIONISM— IT'S CONSUMER PROTECTIONISM

In a recent ad, MWI Import Products attacked the Michigan Plumbing Board for doing its duty—denying approval of imported cast iron soil pipe and fittings from MWI for use on state construction projects. The request for official approval was denied after MWI was unable to provide proof that their products conformed to applicable standards referenced in the Michigan Plumbing Code, according to a written report submitted by the Chief Plumbing Inspector.

So that there's no confusion, at the Cast Iron Soil Pipe Institute – we believe in free speech, healthy competition and fair global trade. But we also believe in getting the facts right. The state of Michigan did not ask the Chinese pipe manufacturer to seek statewide approval for their products, as MWI incorrectly stated in their ad. The importer of Chinese cast iron soil pipe – MWI – asked the state of Michigan to approve the cast iron products they were bringing in from China. So that we're clear, MWI is not a Chinese company nor is it a manufacturer.

MWI also claimed the lack of approval was based on one individual's perception. Again false. The reality is dozens of people from the Michigan Plumbing Board and the Michigan Construction Code Commission were involved in weighing the evidence and making the decision based on the technical merits. Close examination of test reports provided by MWI consistently revealed incomplete or inaccurate information in repeated submittals. The Michigan authorities were simply

unable to conclude despite numerous inquiries and hearings over a span of two years that the Chinese products MWI was outsourcing conformed to applicable product standards referenced in the Michigan Plumbing Code. To simply say their pipe meets standards would have been negligent.

In the end, MWI would have you believe that CISPI is using the codes and standards to restrict trade – a claim that could not be further from the truth. Simply demanding that foreign-made products prove they meet the standard is not a restriction of trade, but a legitimate, understandable requirement of those entrusted with protecting the health, welfare and interest of consumers and taxpayers. Requiring products to conform to applicable product standards is essential in today's world of global outsourcing. The news headlines demonstrate all too



well what can happen if they are not followed. Customers should have the peace of mind of knowing that all manufacturers, including those located overseas, have diligently followed all the necessary quality control requirements embedded in the standards. Anything less will not adequately protect the customer.

It's unfortunate that MWI has chosen to play the victim in this debate instead of simply providing the proof that the Michigan Plumbing Board sought. Because the reality is that when standards are not verifiably met, it's usually the consumer that becomes the real victim.



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