



ROBERT WEXLER
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

April 2, 2009

Dear Governor Crist,

I am writing to you regarding an issue of increasing alarm in Florida – the widespread existence of Chinese drywall in recently constructed residential homes and the serious health risks it poses to citizens, including children and pregnant women throughout Florida. I am asking that you declare a state of emergency in order to make Florida citizens whose homes are affected by Chinese drywall eligible for immediate relief through the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

I am hearing from a growing chorus of individuals in my district and throughout South Florida whose new homes contain Chinese drywall. According to media reports and first-hand testimony from affected citizens, the drywall often produces a sulfurous odor that corrodes pipes and electric wiring, and causes a wide range of serious health problems to individuals exposed to it. Families have written my office regarding young children who have developed bronchitis, pneumonia, and other severe respiratory conditions that have required hospitalization and even surgery. Pregnant women have been asked to leave affected homes and other families are moving out of their newly purchased homes to escape their health problems. In addition to the health concerns, the corrosion of electric wiring and damage to appliances are undoubtedly increasing the risk of fire.

It is estimated that over 35,000 homes in Florida could contain this harmful material and Florida's Department of Health has already logged a growing number of complaints. Developers that previously used Chinese drywall have in effect acknowledged its harmful effects by no longer utilizing it in the construction of new homes. Other companies that have used the drywall have declared bankruptcy leaving affected residents with no genuine legal course of action. The current solution for families whose homes already contain this drywall is to either leave their homes or rip out this material and rebuild, often at their own cost. These are responsible Floridians many of whom cannot afford to purchase a new home and handle a second mortgage, and certainly cannot sell a property that has been tainted by this Chinese drywall and the serious health and fire risks that come with it.

Citizens from Florida are desperate for assistance. This is an acute and growing crisis. I have introduced legislation in Congress along with Senator Bill Nelson that would require a Consumer Product Safety commission study and establish an immediate ban on any drywall that constitute a safety hazard.

This is a significant statewide problem whose devastating impact on families and our state is similar to an a natural disaster such as a hurricane, fire or flood. As such, I am urging you to declare Florida to be in a State of Emergency. This designation will allow state and local officials to work with these families to petition funds from FEMA that could help cover the substantial costs of removing Chinese drywall and repairing these homes with material that meets the appropriate health and safety standards.

Thanks you for your attention to this matter and for your impressive leadership of the state of Florida.

With warm regards,

Congressman Robert Wexler

PALM BEACH COUNTY:
2500 NORTH MILITARY TRAIL
SUITE 490
BOCA RATON, FL 33431
(561) 988-6302
(561) 988-6423 FAX

WEST PALM BEACH:
(561) 732-4000

WASHINGTON, DC:
2241 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20515
(202) 225-3001
(202) 225-5974 FAX

WWW.WEXLER.HOUSE.GOV

BROWARD COUNTY:
MARGATE CITY HALL
5790 MARGATE BLVD.
MARGATE, FL 33063
(954) 972-6454
(954) 974-3191 FAX