



November 16, 2012

The Honorable Lisa Jackson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson,

We are writing to thank the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for this week's announcement of 16 enforcement actions that penalize non-certified contractors for violations of EPA's Renovation Repair and Painting (RRP) rules. It is our understanding that EPA has publicized 19 RRP cases since starting enforcement of the agency's new regulations in October, 2010. The National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) is encouraged that EPA seems to be moving in the right direction, but we remain frustrated by the agency's slow pace of implementing the RRP program. We believe that more effort is needed to expedite federal and state enforcement efforts targeting non-certified contractors. This is needed to increase training and certification in the remodeling sector and to help protect young children and pregnant women from lead poisoning.

NARI is a non-profit trade association based in Des Plaines, Illinois. We have 60 Chapters in major metro areas nationwide and our membership is comprised of remodeling contractors, local suppliers, and national suppliers. Eighty percent of NARI member companies have 20 employees or less. NARI's core purpose is to advance and promote the remodeling industry's professionalism, product and vital public purpose.

We have gone to great lengths to encourage our members to become certified and to spread the word amongst our customers about the importance of hiring EPA-certified remodelers. Despite our efforts, many contractors in the remodeling industry who do work on homes built before 1978 are not certified. Last Spring, EPA announced that 122,476 firms in the construction and remodeling sector were EPA Lead-Safe Certified Firms. According to the Joint Center for Housing Studies of Harvard University, there are 652,206 remodeling businesses in the United States. That means EPA has certified less than 20% of the remodeling firms nation-wide.

One possible reason for the low percentage of certified firms is a perception that EPA and state authorities have not been enforcing the law. That is why your recent enforcement announcement is so important. We hear from remodelers, home builders, and professionals in the construction industry every week about how they are losing bids to contractors who have not shouldered the additional costs of RRP compliance. NARI applauds the recent enforcement activity and asks that EPA prioritize its enforcement efforts against non-certified firms so that the underground economy does not continue.



We are proud of our members who are complying with RRP and who take extra precautions to protect their customers and their customers' families. Unfortunately, NARI Members who are certified operate on an unlevel playing field because of non-compliant contractors. Your recent enforcement actions will go far to dispel the perception of lax enforcement against non-certified contractors who are violating RRP work practice requirements. We urge you to continue those efforts that will allow NARI members to compete on a level playing field and will help protect children and pregnant women.

Your recent actions demonstrate that you have listened to our plea to prioritize lead paint enforcement efforts and focus on situations where non-certified contractors are violating RRP work practice requirements. We believe that these types of enforcement actions will force additional contractors to seek certification. As an additional step, we believe EPA should publicize similarly focused enforcement activities in those states that administer their own RRP programs. The additional awareness will drive up the number of EPA-certified firms, reduce threats to children and pregnant women, and allow for our members to compete on a more level playing field.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mary Busey Harris, CAE
Executive Vice President