

United States Senate

December 20, 2023

Dear Retailer:

As more Americans continue to shop online for the holidays and everyday goods, we must ensure that we protect American families and provide them with the information they need to know regarding where the products they buy online are made. As a leading online retailer, your company has the opportunity to lead this effort. American consumers need to make informed choices for themselves and their families, and your company can do more by providing country of origin information for all its products sold online through its e-commerce platforms.

In recent years, I sent multiple letters urging e-commerce platforms to require merchants to prominently display the country of origin for all goods sold online, as has been done in India. Three years later, these calls have remained unanswered.

Now is the time for e-commerce platforms and retailers to lead the charge on this effort and initiate this same requirement here. I have also introduced and supported legislation to require online retailers to list the country of origin for each product they sell and to give the Federal Trade Commission the authority over such laws.

With recent reports¹ of online consumer spending at the holidays soaring to more than \$200 billion year-over-year, now is the time to provide more transparency in online shopping to keep families safe. Country of origin information and labeling is important to empower consumers to make informed decisions on how they spend their hard-earned cash. It is also important to provide this transparency in the digital era with increased access to retailers from your office, home and handheld devices. Brick and mortar storefronts provide this service to their customers, empowering greater choice, accountability and consumer freedom. It is time that online retailers and e-commerce platforms do the same

Simply listing “imported” for the product’s origin is not enough and does not deliver the transparency Americans need and deserve. For consumers, there is no

¹ Adobe Business Analytics: <https://business.adobe.com/resources/holiday-shopping-report.html>

recourse when trying to make an informed purchasing decision and steward their finances judiciously.

Solving this problem is most important for the goods Americans consume and impact what Americans ingest or put in or on their bodies. Foods, food containers, personal hygiene products and cosmetics are some of the most sensitive and impactful products consumers interact with. Recently, there was a recall² on Cupkin stainless steel cups for children that were manufactured in Communist China. These cups contained lead and were recalled by the company with government advisories issued by the U.S. and Canada. No level of lead is acceptable for anyone to ingest – let alone children. The facts stand that Communist China and Cupkin allowed these unsafe products to be made and shipped to us without adequate intervention to test their safety. This is just one of many examples of the corners Communist China is willing to cut to make cheap products to be imported to America. Americans are powerless to change their buying choices to avoid malign manufacturers and non-market economic actors like Communist China without proper online country of origin labeling. If you only find out where a product is made after it is recalled for lead that could poison your child, it is too late.

The example of Cupkin is sadly just only one of many. Other goods including sewage garlic, spices, toothpaste and pet food all have been brought into the public light for their unsafe contents. Raising awareness of these goods is important, but the only way to stop them is to make it clearly known who the offending manufacturer is and give consumers transparency to not buy goods made by and in that manufacturing facility anymore. Communist China's continuously lacking safety standards are its norm and part of its business model for cheap production. There is no guarantee any goods grown or produced there are acceptable to eat. The U.S. has issued selective warnings over the years on items such as baby formula, milk and chicken. It is time the U.S. solve this problem holistically by having better standards to certify product safety. Until that happens, retailers and e-commerce sites must do more to provide their customers with the information and transparency needed to make informed purchasing choices.

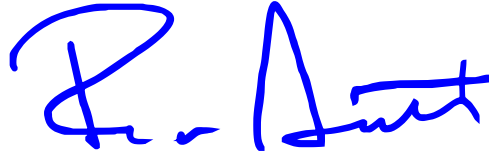
Buying products "Made in America" is the most important step American families can take to have greater safety assurances and recourse if there is a product problem. But Americans can only do this with proper information. Buying "American" is the way to support American jobs, American manufacturers, and American innovation. However, in cases when shoppers must source products from outside the United States and online when they can't look at the product label,

² Consumer Product Safety Commission: <https://www.cpsc.gov/Recalls/2023/Soojimus-Recalls-CUPKIN-Stainless-Steel-Childrens-Cups-Due-to-Violation-of-Federal-Lead-Content-Ban-Recall-Alert>

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Americans have a right to know where the products they buy are made, and I urge you to be a leader in this effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Rick Scott". The signature is stylized with a large initial "R" and a prominent "S".

Rick Scott
United States Senator