

U.S. Legislative Call for Action – Contact your Legislators about OSHA and Silica

For several months, the MIA safety committee and other key partners in the construction industry have alerted you to the fact that the U.S. Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) is proposing to change the allowable exposure limit by one-half. Recognizing that there is strength in numbers, the MIA joined the Construction Industry Safety Coalition (CISC) which is comprised of twenty-five trade associations (including the Natural Stone Council and Building Stone Institute), to contribute feedback of the process and hopefully influence the result.

The CISC has just submitted a new report to OSHA on the “Costs to the Construction Industry and Jobs Impacts from OSHA’s Proposed Occupational Exposure Standards for Crystalline Silica”. In this report, the CISC estimates that OSHA’s proposed silica standard will now cost the industry more than \$4.9 billion per year, increasing our original estimate by approximately 20 percent since our post-hearing economic analysis was submitted.

This new analysis shows an additional \$1.05 billion per year of indirect costs will be placed on the construction industry in the form of increased prices paid for construction materials and building products (i.e., block, stone, tile, concrete, paint, countertops, etc.) when manufacturers of those materials pass on some of their costs of complying with the “General Industry” portion of OSHA’s proposed silica standard, while \$3.9 billion per year (which we already provided to OSHA) will be direct compliance expenditures by the construction industry for additional equipment, labor, monitoring, medical surveillance, record-keeping, etc. In addition to the proposed rule being more costly than originally estimated, the report translates the costs into significant job losses for the construction industry and the broader economy. The CISC estimates that the proposed regulation would reduce the number of jobs in the U.S. economy by more than 52,700 yearly.

On March 11th, the CISC submitted a request for a 60-day extension of time for submitting written comments in response to the agency’s request for information. OSHA issued a 180 day extension of the comment period on March 25th based on the CISC and other organizations written requests. Comments now due October 9, 2015.

How can you help? We urge all members to write to their two U.S. Senators and designated House of Representatives member about this matter.

While safety is paramount to each of us, the assumptions that were made by OSHA in developing this rule are completely off base. We believe the current silica rule has done a fantastic job of reducing related illnesses so much so that it is still declining every year and current projections have it being eliminated over time.

We recommend that you include the following documents:

- [Sample letter](#)
- [New study finds that OSHA underestimated cost of silica rule by \\$4.5 billion a year](#)
- [How OSHA's Silica Proposal Impacts Construction](#)