



US Trade Association Calls on South Carolina State University to Stop Promoting Bad Science

Washington, DC (April 11, 2017)---The National Candle Association (NCA) is calling upon the leadership of South Carolina State University to remove information from its website about research that the trade association says is erroneous, unsubstantiated and misleading.

In letter to South Carolina State University president James E. Clark, Dr. John Heinze, science consultant to NCA, explained that the research, conducted by university faculty member Dr. Ruhullah Massoudi and an undergraduate student, was flawed from the start and that statements about the study included in a university press release are without merit. The press release remains on the SCSU website despite the fact that the study has not been published, or subject to scientific peer review in the years since a summary of the study was presented at a scientific conference (August 2009). Further research on this topic has not been reported by the authors, nor has Professor Massoudi responded to a previous NCA letter in 2015 pointing out the scientific errors in the study.

“It’s clear from just the project title, ‘Soybean Candles for Healthy Life and Well Being,’ that Professor Massoudi’s research had a predetermined outcome,” Dr. Heinze said. “Upon examining the research project description, it’s apparent that Professor Massoudi predisposed that petroleum based candles pose a health risk and that soy candles are better for health, which are completely unsubstantiated. Further, one can readily conclude that the objective of the research was to drive consumer demand for soy candles by promulgating alleged dangers from petroleum based candles, which promises a conclusion beyond the study design.”

The research project, “Soybean Candles for Healthy Life and Well Being” was funded by the US Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) agency. As published on the USDA NIFA website, the goals of the research were to: *“address the realization of health and well being (sic) of our citizens by considerably reducing the possible environmental pollutants caused by candles made from petroleum-base. Studies related to the harmful chemicals of paraffin candles and the lack of comparable pollutants in soybean candles are of utmost interest. The second objective is to address the economical (sic) feasibility of replacing a renewable source like soybean for petroleum source, which is not renewable and depletes and depends on foreign import. Beyond that, using soybean would bring a healthy economy to our farmers by producing more and better products. Certainly this study would provide great deal of information concerning health issues relating to inhaling emissions from candles.”*

In the letter to Dr. Clark, Dr. Heinze explained that the university's press release about the research states study conclusions related to health impacts that are not demonstrated by the study, or supported by available science.

"The public and members of the media are increasingly sensitive to the value of truth and the importance of facts to back up a headline," said Dr. Heinze. "So in the spirit of truth I fully disclose that I work with the National Candle Association and have their interests in mind. But I am first and foremost a scientist specializing in environmental health and safety. As such, I seek evidence to back up claims alleged to be based in science. There is no evidence to back up Professor Massoudi's claims."

Dr. Heinze noted that before writing to South Carolina State University President, Dr. Clark, he tried contacting Dr. Massoudi directly by phone, email and post and received no reply from the researcher.

Copies of the NCA's letter to Dr. Clark were also sent to Dr. Learie B. Luke, South Carolina State University's Acting Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dr. Judith Salley-Guydon, Chair of the Department of Biological and Physical Sciences. A copy of the letter may be viewed [here](http://bit.ly/NCALetter). (<http://bit.ly/NCALetter>)

The National Candle Association (NCA) is the trade association representing US candle manufacturers and their suppliers. It is widely recognized as the leading technical authority on candle manufacturing, science and safety. For additional information visit www.candles.org.

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