

# **MIA e-Brief on the Radon-in-Granite Issue**

**November 7, 2008**

*MIA is happy to report that the news is getting better in our effort to defend our industry from attacks.. The tone of media coverage remains supportive, and the scientific work underway is encouraging. And we've found that at least one of our attackers doesn't have state certification to conduct radon testing in his home state.*

*Because of the continuing need for brevity and the fact that research is not yet totally finished, we cannot share as much detail as we hope to soon, but here is a quick update on our recent efforts:*

## **Science**

- **Scientific testing.** *Many of you may already know that we're in the process of conducting the world's most comprehensive analysis of radiation and radon emissions from granite. We hope to issue our findings soon, but I want to report that the early results give us reason for optimism. After testing nearly 200 samples of more than 100 varieties of granite, it appears that science continues to validate the position that granite does not pose any significant health risk. That means we will have more definitive scientific data to reassure consumers.*
- **Interim test protocols/standards.** *We've made real progress on interim standards. Our scientific consultants have created a standard testing protocol for in-home testing and are developing standard testing protocols to analyze stones in fabrication and retail shops. Ultimately, we plan to announce standards for testing at the quarry, which would be the most efficient way to test our products (at their source).*
- **Additional data.** *Some of you may know that Grupo Cosentino has announced it will support the Marble Institute of America's efforts to defend our industry. One aspect of that support is that Francisco Cosentino has personally promised to share his company's granite test data. There have been some delays in getting the information, but we remain optimistic that Cosentino will share the information soon.*
- **BuildClean data.** *Apparently, some state health and environmental agencies have responded to our suggestions by requesting that BuildClean, the Houston group that claims to have significant data questioning the safety of granite, share that data. BuildClean has repeatedly refused to share it with the MIA, saying it will only cooperate with independent organizations. It's not clear whether BuildClean has provided any information, but the group posted some website comments suggesting that our encouraging independent agencies to request the information was somehow an effort to "bully" BuildClean. BuildClean has promised that it will soon release a study based on its testing of granite countertops. It's impossible to predict the nature of that study, but we very much look forward to seeing it.*

## **Public Relations**

- **News coverage.** *You may have noticed that we issued a press release based on a large Harris Interactive survey of American adults. The study showed that granite remains the most popular countertop material for dream kitchens, preferred by 55 percent of respondents. The second-place choice, synthetic stone, was preferred by 12 percent of respondents. We've gotten some significant attention for the release and are using study findings in media outreach.*

- **Mat release.** We've issued one mat release that is now being distributed to thousands of newspapers large and small across the United States. The release - actually an article discussing the advantages of granite countertops - has begun to appear on some websites. We expect to see much more print coverage in the coming weeks. We're currently developing a second article - promoting the popularity of granite, based on the Harris Interactive survey - which we intend to release in the coming week.
- **New York Times/CBS.** Based on some new information, we are again asking both the New York Times and CBS to revisit the stories that caused the unfortunate public panic. More on that when we have additional information.
- **A news source discredited.** A radon technician who has fanned the flames of consumer fear apparently has some certification issues. Following a significant investigation, we have discovered that the individual apparently lost his certification to conduct certain types of radon testing in his home state. We're assessing how this affects our efforts to defend the industry.

## **Legal**

- **Legal review.** Our analysis of state warranty laws continues and we are developing counsel for the industry about the nature of individual state laws governing consumer warranties. The effort is taking time because of the huge variation in state laws.
- **Defense/offense.** While we have not heard back from any test labs that purport to find granite countertops pose a health risk, we continue efforts to gather information from them. Meanwhile, we've found that some previously vocal labs and technicians have gone quiet. Still, our goal here is to identify any stones that may pose risks - because we remain committed to protecting both consumers and our industry.
- **Affiliation Agreement.** We are laying the ground work to partner with a nationally recognized scientific testing organization to be our endorsed testing agency to use our newly developed testing protocols and standards. Negotiations are ongoing and we hope to have an affiliation agreement in the coming weeks.

As you can see, progress continues, but MIA must stress that our work will not end soon - not even if the attacks stop. We have seen detractors raise the issue of granite safety several times in the past. Today, we must take the steps to quash these attacks once and for all.

That's why your support for the Truth About Granite Fund is so critical. The scientific analysis, legal defense and proactive communications are all expensive and they are all necessary to restore the luster to granite - and to protect our businesses from groundless accusations aimed at destroying the market for our products.

Please send your contributions to the MIA TRUTH ABOUT GRANITE FUND, c/o Marble Institute of America, 28901 Clemens Road #100, Westlake, OH 44145. All contributions are being deposited in a special account dedicated to this fight so critical to our futures.