

FIX THE LEAD PAINT RULE, NAHB TELLS EPA

The lack of a reliable lead paint test kit continues to have potentially disastrous consequences for homeowners—and it's time for federal regulators to take action, the NAHB recently told representatives of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Remodeler Bob Hanbury, a 40-year veteran of the industry and longtime NAHB leader, brought the association's concerns about the lack of an affordable, reliable lead paint test kit to the EPA during a June 4 meeting of regulators, health advocates, and building industry representatives in Washington, D.C.

Without an affordable, reliable lead paint test kit, remodelers are forced to presume the presence of lead paint in all pre-1978 housing. Add that to the fact that there is no longer an "opt-out" provision in the Lead: Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) rule for work done in homes not occupied by children under 6 or pregnant women—the target population of the rule—and the result is that remodelers must use the more expensive lead-safe work practices in all homes built before 1978.

The EPA's own estimates say that just 24 percent of homes built between 1960 and 1977 contain lead-based paint. That means that "76 percent of the time, the rule is being applied in a home never intended to be covered by the RRP rule," Hanbury pointed out.

The result: Homeowners are paying for services they don't need—or are choosing unprofessional, fly-by-night contractors willing to flout the law, a potentially dangerous situation that "doesn't provide the desired health benefits or mitigate a hazard to pregnant women or children under 6," Hanbury said.

Hanbury offered two immediate solutions for regulators:

- Limit the regulation's scope to homes built before 1960, which have a greater likelihood of containing lead paint.
- Revisit the opt-out provision so that the lead-safe practices are focused on homes where young children under the age of 6 and pregnant women are actually present.

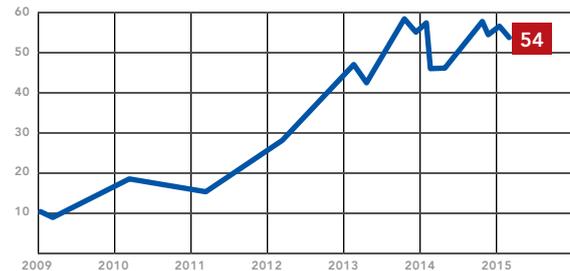
The EPA also needs to conduct a new economic analysis reflecting the reality of the RRP program. The agency had estimated that once reliable test kits were available—which it thought would be by 2011—the number of work sites covered by the rule would be cut in half from about 14 million to 7 million. That hasn't happened, and as a result, it has created an unnecessary burden on EPA Lead Safe Certified Renovators and their clients. **PB**

ABOUT NAHB: THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF HOME BUILDERS IS A WASHINGTON, D.C.-BASED TRADE ASSOCIATION REPRESENTING MORE THAN 140,000 MEMBERS INVOLVED IN REMODELING, HOME BUILDING, MULTIFAMILY CONSTRUCTION, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, SUBCONTRACTING, DESIGN, HOUSING FINANCE, BUILDING PRODUCT MANUFACTURING, AND OTHER ASPECTS OF RESIDENTIAL AND LIGHT COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION. FOR MORE, VISIT NAHB.ORG.

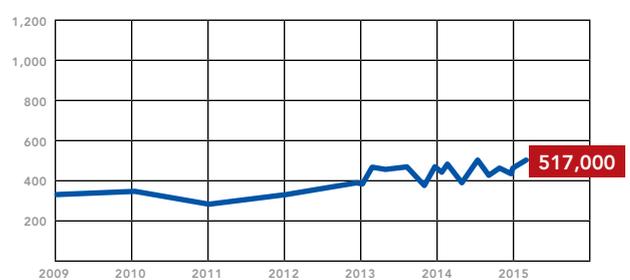


HOUSING MARKET SNAPSHOT

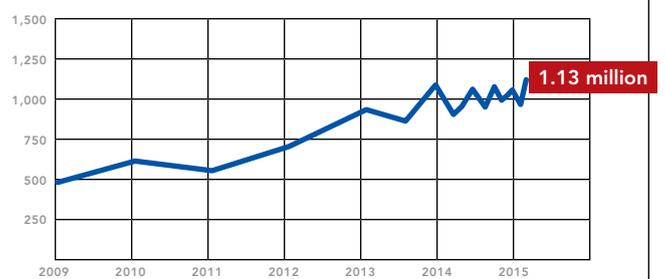
BUILDER CONFIDENCE DECREASED



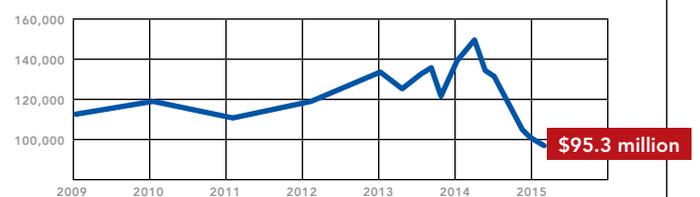
NEW-HOME SALES JUMPED



HOUSING STARTS ROSE



REMODELING SPENDING DECLINED



Confidence among builders decreased 2 points from April to 54 in May, according to the NAHB/Wells Fargo Housing Index. New-home sales were up 6.8 percent from March to April, rising from 484,000 to 517,000. Housing starts soared 20.2 percent from March to April, rising to 1.1 million. Remodelers spent \$95.3 million on projects in March, a 3 percent decrease from the previous month.