



October 10, 2025

The Honorable Tom McClintock
U.S. House Judiciary Committee
2138 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: Support for H.R. 5437 – Protection of Lawful Commerce in Stone Slab Sales

Dear Representative McClintock and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

On behalf of the Natural Stone Institute (NSI) and our members who sell stone slabs across the United States, I write in support of House Bill 5437, the *Protection of Lawful Commerce in Stone Slab Sales Act*.

Our organization represents the nation's stone fabricators, installers, distributors, quarriers, and others that form the backbone of the natural stone industry. We recognize that **silicosis is a serious occupational hazard** that must continue to be addressed through robust training, compliance, and oversight. The NSI collaborates heavily with the government regulatory agencies and offers many training resources to fabricators/ installers.

A simple fact about our industry is that the **sale of stone slabs** (a raw building material) **does not, in itself, cause silicosis**.

In recent years, a **growing volume of lawsuits** has targeted distributors and manufacturers solely for providing materials that are handled downstream by other entities. These lawsuits are causing severe economic harm to businesses within our community; many of which are small and mid-sized businesses now facing untenable legal exposure, rising insurance costs, and reputational damage unrelated to any negligence or wrongdoing.

The Natural Stone Institute supports H.R. 5437 as a necessary and fair clarification of liability in the commerce of stone materials. This legislation would protect U.S. companies including hundreds of my members (distributors, quarriers, and others) whose operations and employees are suffering as a direct result of litigation that misconstrues the nature of product responsibility in our sector.

We also welcome the opportunity to work collaboratively with the Judiciary Committee to strengthen this bill through two modest amendments:

1. Include sellers of consumable products (such as blades, pads, and similar accessories) within the scope of protection; and
2. Consider language that would safeguard OSHA-compliant fabricators who adhere to recognized safety standards and controls.

We appreciate your leadership in protecting fair commerce and due process under the law. The Natural Stone Institute stands ready to assist in the legislative process

and to provide technical input on implementation, industry standards, and occupational safety best practices.

I would be happy to share stories about our members who are now considering bankruptcy and/or record level insurance premiums because they see no end in sight with the onslaught of lawsuits.

Thank you for your consideration and for your commitment to support our industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JAH', with a stylized flourish at the end.

James A. Hieb, CAE
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