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November 30, 2011

Hon. Lamar Smith  
Chairman  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on the Judiciary  
2138 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Hon. John Conyers  
Ranking Member  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on the Judiciary  
B-351 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Smith and Ranking Member Conyers:

We write as a company that manufactures in the United States to offer our strong support for H.R. 3261, the Stop Online Piracy Act, or SOPA. Online piracy is a terrible and growing problem for American manufacturing companies that is killing American manufacturing jobs and costing the American economy untold billions of dollars every year. We applaud your leadership in tackling this critical issue.

Much of the discussion about SOPA has centered on copyright theft suffered by the recording, publishing, and movie industries. Those industries have indeed experienced profound harm as a result of illegal online piracy, but we cannot lose sight of the harm also suffered by U.S. manufacturers. Nor can we ignore the harm suffered by the U.S. consumers who are duped into purchasing illegal counterfeit products that are not what they paid for, of inferior quality, and in certain cases unsafe. Law enforcement would quickly shut down brick and mortar stores openly selling counterfeit products. There is no reason to treat online stores openly doing the same any differently.

Manufacturers typically spend enormous sums building up brand recognition and consumer trust in their products. Online piracy robs U.S. manufacturers not only of sales, but also of their hard won reputations. Inferior quality merchandise that is passed off for genuine harms brand reputation. There have been many instances in which brand name companies receive quality complaints from consumers who think the counterfeit products they purchased online are genuine, often because the online pirates brazenly included the contact information for the genuine brand holder in their packaging.

We appreciate your support of American manufacturing and stand ready to help you pass this important piece of legislation as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,