Robert Reynolds
P.O. Box 8517
Tampa, FL 33674

The Tampa Tribune, Saturday, August 9, 1997

LETTERS

'Made in USA' label may soon be meaningless

The Federal Trade Commission is about to close the comment period on its proposal to water down the standards that determine what products qualify to call themselves "Made in USA." Concerned consumers must speak up by the commission's Aug. 11 deadline.

Briefly, "Made in USA." will no longer mean what it says. Presently, consumers can have the confidence that "Made in USA" products are "all, or virtually all" made in this country. Incredibly, the Federal Trade Commission would have us believe that "this is not what consumers expect in an increasingly global economy," to quote a Federal Trade Commission press release. It's not what we expect? Nonsense! It is exactly what we expect!

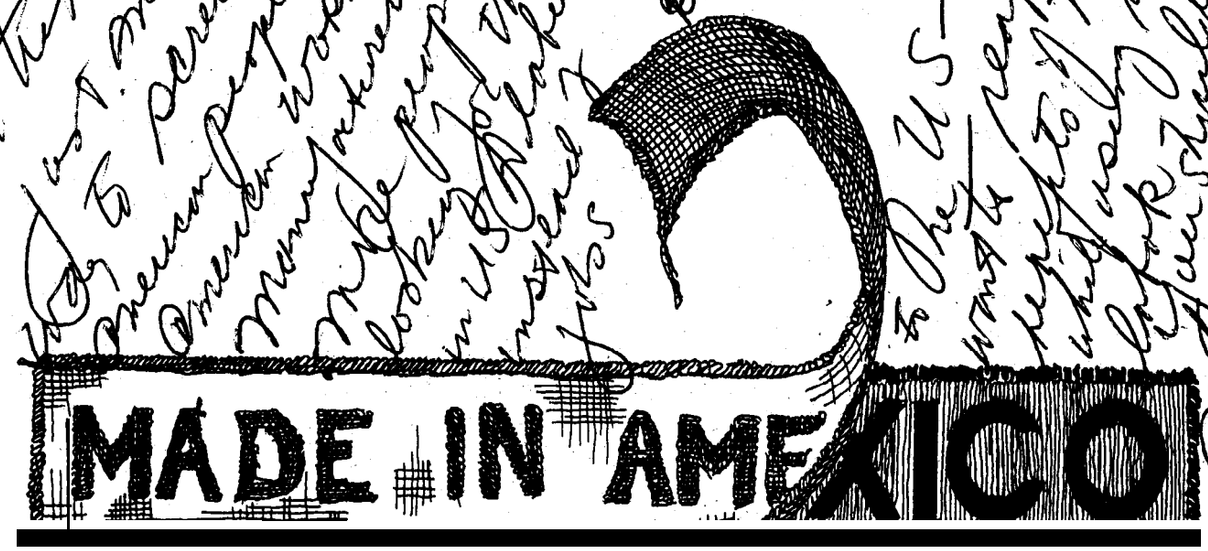
The commission outlines some safe harbors in their proposal, whereby we are somehow protected. These include guidelines where a product's final stages must be a U.S.-based operation, and if it came in from overseas, it must undergo "substantial transformations" to earn the label "Made in USA."

It will be interesting to see to what lengths multinational manufacturers go to defend their U.S.-based "substantial transformation" piece.

Can a blue widget come in to the United States only to be painted red and be sold as "Made in USA"? My guess is that the deception of consumers may not be quite so blatant, but by any definition, future labels of "Made in USA" will have such ambiguous meaning as to be meaningless.

The Federal Trade Commission proposals must be stopped, and public opinion has only days or even hours to be heard in Washington.

Those concerned may write to office of the Secretary, Federal Trade Commission, Room 159, Sixth and Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C., 20580. Label the correspondence "Made in USA Policy Comment."



MATT HARRINGTON/for the Los Angeles Times Syndicate

The Federal Trade Commission is also taking comments on the World Wide Web *www.ftc.gov*. Deadline for all comments is Monday.

More than 100 members of Congress are co-sponsoring a bill, H. Con. Res. 80, to stop these disastrous standards in their tracks. Those concerned about this approach to the issue should contact their member of Congress immediately.

— RICK WALDEMAR
Inverness

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
RECEIVED DOCUMENTS
SECRETARY
AUG 13 1997

353