

**Analysis of Proposed Consent Order to Aid Public Comment**  
***In the Matter of Benjamin Moore & Co., Inc., File No. 1623079***

The Federal Trade Commission (“FTC” or “Commission”) has accepted, subject to final approval, an agreement containing a consent order from Benjamin Moore & Co., Inc. (“respondent”).

The proposed consent order has been placed on the public record for thirty (30) days for receipt of comments by interested persons. Comments received during this period will become part of the public record. After thirty (30) days, the Commission will again review the agreement and the comments received, and will decide whether it should withdraw from the agreement or make final the agreement’s proposed order.

This matter involves respondent’s marketing, sale, and distribution of purportedly “emission-free” paints. Emission is any compound emitted from paint during application or thereafter and includes volatile organic compounds (or VOCs). According to the FTC complaint, respondent made unsubstantiated representations that Natura paints: (1) are emission-free; (2) are emission-free during or immediately after painting; (3) will not emit any chemical or substance, including VOCs, that causes material harm to consumers, including sensitive populations such as babies and allergy and asthma sufferers; and (4) will not emit any chemical or substance, including VOCs, during or immediately after painting, that causes material harm to consumers, including sensitive populations such as babies and allergy and asthma sufferers. The FTC also alleges that respondent used its Green Promise seal without adequately disclosing that respondent awarded the seal to its own product. Consumers likely interpret such seals as a claim that an independent third party certified the product. The FTC further alleges that respondent provided independent retailers with promotional materials containing the same claims it made to consumers. Thus, the complaint alleges that respondent engaged in deceptive practices in violation of Section 5(a) of the FTC Act.

The proposed consent order contains five provisions designed to prevent respondent from engaging in similar acts and practices in the future. Part I prohibits emission-free and VOC-free claims unless both content and emission are actually zero or at trace levels. The orders define “emission” to include all emissions (not just VOCs that cause smog). This definition reflects the Commission’s Enforcement Policy Statement and consumer expectations: consumers are likely concerned about the potential health effects from exposure to chemical emissions found in indoor air, not just VOCs that affect outdoor air quality. The order defines “trace level of emission” to mean (1) no intentionally added VOC, (2) emission of the covered product does not cause material harm that consumers typically associate with emission, including harm to the environment or human health, and (3) emission of the covered product does not result in more than harmless concentrations of any compound higher than would be found under normal conditions in the typical residential home without interior architectural coating. Part II prohibits misleading representations regarding emission, VOC levels, odor, and any general environmental and health benefit of paints. The order requires competent and reliable scientific evidence to substantiate these representations. Parts IV and V prohibit respondent from

false, unsubstantiated, or otherwise misleading representations of material fact regarding paints, including any representation prohibited by Parts I, II, IV or V.

To correct allegedly existing unsubstantiated zero emission and VOC claims and deceptive certification claims, Part III requires the respondent to send letters to .004 T-3(i)--7..00ond