

FACT SHEET – RENFRO FACE MASKS

June 9, 2020

I. Background on the Company

- Renfro is a 99-year-old American apparel manufacturer.
- It employs thousands across the US, including in the State of Tennessee.
- The Company has been manufacturing socks in the State of Tennessee since 1939.
- Renfro adheres to rigorous health and safety regulations established by many national agencies.
- The manufacturing science/regulatory compliance foundation of Renfro is sophisticated.
- Renfro is proud of what it's been able to do to provide American made face masks to communities and people with who may not have otherwise had access to them.
- **On top of that –the company has created approximately 500 new jobs to produce these USA made face masks to employ people who may not have otherwise been working during this time.**

II. Background on situation

- In March, Renfro switched its manufacturing facilities to focus on producing cloth face coverings to fight against COVID-19 in an effort to step up at a time the country was in need.
- Although the state of Tennessee has been able to hand out free face masks to citizens who may not have otherwise had access to a face mask, the past few days have done nothing but confuse Tennesseans with conflicting news reports and a flurry of misinformation.
- **This is disheartening when you see that others, including the federal government, are also providing masks with silver technology.**
- The Department of Health and Human Services website details how their masks are different than other masks you might buy, indicating: “The face coverings you received are 100% cotton, but they also contain silver and copper which help kill or stop the growth of viruses and germs.”([source](#))
- We need people wearing face masks right now to help prevent the spread of this virus, we don't need people confused by news reports.
- It is Renfro's hope that the people of Tennessee will continue to wear face masks to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- There are many recommendations for making homemade masks that suggest using a wide range of fabrics including pillow cases, dish towels, bandanas, and t-shirts among other apparel and textiles. Many of these fabrics ALSO contain silver, copper, or other additives.

III. The Facts on SILVADUR™ 930 FLEX Antimicrobial (Silvadur 930)

- Silvadur 930 – the antimicrobial technology used in production of the Renfro face masks – is safe for human health when used as indicated.
- This material is used in a variety of things you probably come into contact with every day, including bed sheets, pillow cases, athletic wear, and underwear.
- Antimicrobials inhibit the growth of bacteria on fabrics.
- **It would not be uncommon if something you were wearing right now contained this substance.**
- The EPA has evaluated Silvadur 930 Flex and determined that it is safe for use as a materials preservative in textiles or fabric.
- According to the EPA, once Silvadur 930 Flex is incorporated or impregnated into the fabric, it is extremely unlikely that it would be inhaled; therefore, EPA considers inhalation exposures to be negligible and not of concern.

IV. Renfro masks are the well-suited for this Pandemic

- **Renfro created a face mask that is comfortable, and contains Silvadur 930 Flex Antimicrobial technology, which is known for inhibiting the growth of bacteria on fabrics.**
- The company went through extensive efforts to make an affordable, comfortable, and reusable facemask -- and it's made in the USA.
- Renfro worked with a major health system on the design and we found that comfort was a big issue. If face masks are comfortable then people will be more likely to wear them to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Renfro created a unique comfortable face mask to comply with the CDC recommendation to wear cloth face coverings to reduce the spread of COVID-19.
- The Renfro face masks are not intended to be used in surgical or clinic settings and do not replace the N95 used in health care settings.

V. Renfro masks are a tool in helping minimize the spread of COVID-19, they are not a threat to human health.

- The three most commonly cited ways to combat COVID-19 are sanitation, social distancing, and the use of face masks.
- Renfro is proud to be a part of that solution.
- Renfro employees wear these masks, its employees have also provided masks to family and friends, including their children. Renfro is confident they are safe.
- Renfro recently completed a campaign in a partnership with prominent North Carolina health systems and the City of Winston Salem to supply masks to the citizens of Winston Salem and has been working on supplying masks to other communities

- Renfro’s efforts have primarily been focused on getting masks to community and employers to reopen the country.
- The masks are authorized under the FDA Emergency Use Authorization

VI. The Federal Government is providing masks by the millions to citizens with Silver technology

- The Department of Health and Human Services website details how their masks are different than other masks you might buy, indicating: “The face coverings you received are 100% cotton, but they also contain silver and copper which help kill or stop the growth of viruses and germs.”([source](#))

VII. Renfro is discouraged by the negative attention but is hopeful that it can restore the confidence of Tennesseans in its masks

- This has been a great source of pride for Renfro and the company is disheartened that its associates are waking up to see things disparaging their efforts in the news
- Following the CDC recommendation, Governor Lee rightfully prioritized getting masks to all Tennesseans.
- If the CDC is recommending that people wear these, then it is the company’s opinion that everyone should have access to them – including those who would not otherwise have access.
- This is the American spirit – business and government can work together to address issues most pressing to our communities and this should have been a great example of that.
- Renfro remains proud of its masks and has full confidence in them.

VIII. Renfro Is Proud to Supply Tennessee with masks

- The fact is that these masks were manufactured to PROTECT human health from a terrible virus in the middle of an unprecedented pandemic.
- Renfro was able to fill a need quickly and effectively amidst an unprecedented pandemic, and is very proud of that.
- The CDC recommended in April that face coverings be worn to protect against the spread of COVID-19.
- At the same time the country was facing a decision of prioritizing scarce resources – like masks- for health care workers on the front lines.
- Renfro stepped up at a time when these scarce resources became very important to the health of our country and is very proud of that.
- Renfro was able to ramp up quickly to produce more than a million masks a week –the company doesn’t believe there are many other companies that could have done that.

- The need was pressing, Renfro stepped up and delivered, and is proud and honored to participate in helping the country through this very difficult time.
- Renfro also created 500 new jobs for those who might otherwise have not been working while doing so.

IX. Regarding the Non-Government Advocacy Group Studies Cited in Media

- Renfro will not comment on the stance taken by advocacy groups.
- You can find instances of disapproval of anything by a specific advocacy group
- The use of the technology that Renfro is employing is widely accepted and widely used and the company is not aware of any studies that have shown any harmful human effects.

X. Safety Data Sheet for Silvadur Cited In Media - Misleading

- Safety data sheets are typically used for product handling of the raw material – which consumers do not typically do.
- If you were to look up the Material Safety Data Sheet for Sodium Fluoride, which is in all toothpaste, the material safety data sheet would say (paraphrasing): it's toxic if swallowed, it's harmful the skin, it's harmful to the eyes, and it attacks human organs.
- Clearly no one would use toothpaste if we read that in that sense, however the general public still uses toothpaste containing sodium fluoride on a daily basis.
- **But these Safety Data Sheets are talking about concentrated formulations that are not relevant to what the consumer is getting.**
- Bottom line is Renfro is 100% confident in its masks.

XI. Pesticides Headlines Out of Context - Misleading

- This should not even be part of the conversation, yet one misguided report led to terrible headlines.
- It's unfortunate and it's sensational journalism at its worst during a national health crisis.
- **Classifying Renfro masks as being treated with "pesticides" is similar to saying there are pesticides in antibacterial hand soap that we've all been using rigorously during the pandemic.**
- Any substance that inhibits any sort of pest is classified as a pesticide per the federal definition– bacteria, mold, and mildew are classified as "pests" – so therefore antimicrobial is classified as a "pesticide" by the federal government.
- Media should not refer to what is in Renfro masks as pesticides in a vacuum as has been done because it is misleading – the company is working to correct the record.
- **Chlorine, which is used commercially to sanitize fruits, vegetables & eggs as well as water systems, is a registered pesticide.**
- [Chlorine Registration](#)

- Chlorine is registered because it is a sanitizing substance that meets the EPA definition but it has many important uses for human health
- **Imagine the concern people would have if chlorine was widely reported as a pesticide out of context.**
- Given that these masks are for the purpose of preventing the spread of COVID-19, many manufacturers are actually citing silver technology as a selling point, including the federal government who cites silver's purpose in fighting bacteria on its website.

XII. Regarding The 2010 EPA Study Cited In Media – Wrong Product

- This study has nothing to do with any technology or material used in Renfro masks.
- This is a technical, but extremely important distinction.
- Nano silver, which was referenced in the study, and Silver Ion polymer- which we use - **are very different technologies**.
- The decade old study that came up in a news report is referring to nano-silver.
- This does not apply to what Renfro has used on the masks it has produced.
- This is incredibly misleading and has caused great confusion.

XIII. Examples of other mask makers using materials in the Silvadur Antimicrobial family (many are advertising this on websites)

- [A Georgia –based manufacturer](#) who is supplying state election officers with masks to protect against COVID-19 specifically advertises their masks contain this technology on their [website](#).
- This technology is not something those in the textiles industry hide from.
- This technology is in sheets, athletic wear, and pillow cases that we all use every day, and it's because it's technology that helps prevent microbial growth on textiles.
- Other mask makers who note silver technology:
 - [HHS](#) – as part of their Project America Strong
 - [Proper Cloth](#)
 - [Lambs](#)
 - [Jaanuu](#)
 - [Siftex](#)

