



Mattel's CEO Faces Skeptical Lawmakers

By Diane Bartz

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WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Mattel CEO Robert Eckert defended his company's toy safety record on Wednesday.

Eckert told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee that his company was aggressively testing toys.

"I can assure this committee that we'll share with other toy companies what we've learned to help improve safety," Eckert said.

Mattel, the world's largest toy maker, has come under scrutiny following the recall of about 21 million of its toys.

On Tuesday, the subcommittee released a letter from Mattel disclosing that the recent recalls included 10 million of its toys.

Some lawmakers on the panel asked whether Eckert himself was responsive enough to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission.

"That's a poor kind of cooperation to be afforded this committee and it will hardly be helpful in our relationship," said Rep. Janice Schakowsky.

Rep. Janice Schakowsky, the second ranking Democrat on the subcommittee on consumer protection, said she was disappointed.

"Our staff has not been able to discover what happened because Mattel has decided to obstruct our inquiry," she said.

"I believe that Mr. Eckert, Mattel's chairman, hopes to be able to -- be able to stonewall us the way he has

Eckert said future investigations by congressional staff would be treated differently by Mattel staff and employees.

"I am aware of situations where the staff didn't feel like they had adequate access. We tried very hard to

LAWMAKER BUYS NOTHING MADE IN CHINA

Amid reports of growing consumer wariness about Chinese-made goods, Rep. Michael Burgess, a Texas

"What most of us are concerned about is the safety of imported goods, especially those imported from the

Eckert, whose company makes more than 80 percent of its toys in China, was asked by reporters after the

Eckert's appearance before a congressional panel was the second in as many weeks.

Last week, Eckert told a Senate Appropriations subcommittee that Mattel was taking aggressive action to

If ingested, lead paint can cause irritability and lethargy. Higher doses can lead to learning disabilities and

(Additional reporting by Justin Grant)