



February 28, 2020

Submitted electronically

Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program
Washington State Department of Ecology
P.O. Box 47600
Olympia, WA 98504-7696

Re: The Safer Products for Washington Priority Consumer Products Draft Report to Legislature (Jan. 2020; Publication 20-04-004)

To whom it may concern:

Novalis Innovative Flooring submits these comments to the State of Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology) on Ecology's Priority Consumer Products Draft Report to Legislature (Draft Report), submitted as part of the Safer Products for Washington (SPW) program. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this important initiative.

Novalis Innovative Flooring manufactures luxury vinyl tile flooring. Novalis Innovative Flooring is a member of the Resilient Floor Covering Institute (RFCI), an association representing the interests of the resilient floor covering industry. We support and hereby incorporate by reference the comments on the Draft Report submitted by RFCI on March 2, 2020.

We submit these comments to provide additional information regarding the dramatic reduction in use of ortho-phthalates in the manufacture of vinyl flooring by manufacturers of vinyl flooring, including Novalis Innovative Flooring.

As discussed in RFCI's comments, vinyl flooring manufacturers have already moved away from the use of ortho-phthalates towards alternatives, including terephthalates (which, as explained in further detail in RFCI's comments, are structurally very different from the ortho-phthalates that drive the listing of "phthalates" as a priority chemical class under the SPW program). This transition was in part due to public pressure related to the "Mind the Store" campaign, whereby the largest home improvement retail chains in the United States (Home Depot, Lowes, and Menards) and others adopted policies to phase out ortho-phthalate-containing PVC flooring by the end of 2015.¹ Because of these retail store policies, the vast majority of vinyl flooring sold in the state of Washington (and throughout the United States) is now manufactured without ortho-phthalates.²

¹ See, e.g., Consumer Reports, "Lumber Liquidators Will Stop Selling Vinyl Flooring Made with Reprocessed Plastic" (Nov. 20, 2015), available online at <https://www.consumerreports.org/flooring/Lumber-Liquidators-to-clean-up-its-vinyl-floors/>.

² See, e.g., Safer Chemicals, Healthy Families, "Success!—Home Improvement Retailers Follow Through on Commitments to Remove Phthalates from Flooring" (June 27, 2019), available online at

The experience of Novalis Innovative Flooring supports this industry trend. Novalis Innovative Flooring stopped using ortho-phthalates in our vinyl flooring products in 2014, and all Novalis Innovative Flooring products are 100% ortho-phthalate-free. Novalis flooring products use a bio-based plasticizer and DOTP, a non-phthalate plasticizer. In addition, the newly introduced SPC product line is based on rigid core technology, so the core does not require any plasticizer. Furthermore, Novalis Innovative Flooring products are 100% free of any formaldehyde and meet the California Department of Public Health Standard Method for low volatile organic compound, or VOC, emissions, earning FloorScore and the stringent Indoor Advantage Gold and GREENGUARD Gold certifications. Finally, Novalis transparently declares the contents down to 0.001% and environmental impact of its products in publicly available Declare labels, Health Product Declarations, and Environmental Product Declarations.

Our voluntary, proactive shift towards the use of alternatives to ortho-phthalates is evidence of the wider trend within the vinyl flooring industry and demonstrates Novalis Innovative Flooring's continued commitment to the production of safe, sustainable products—and responding to public concerns regarding perceived risk even where data demonstrate risk is minimal to non-existent. Novalis Innovative Flooring appreciates Ecology's goals in developing and implementing the SPW program, and we are happy to provide additional information if that would be useful to Ecology as it works to finalize its list of priority products.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this information in connection with this important regulatory initiative. If you have any questions regarding this letter, please contact Nicole Granath, Novalis Sustainability Manager, at nicole.granath@novalis-intl.com.

Sincerely,

Nicole Granath
Sustainability Manager
Novalis Innovative Flooring