

LEAD-BASED PAINT PROGRAM WITHDRAWAL 12-23-02

For Charles Chisolm to respond:

This is another example of the legislature failing to adequately address the problem at hand. The Governor and DEQ have been working with the legislative leadership for more than two years to resolve the EPA's concern.

The Governor's position all along has been to fix the problem. The problem is that state audit privilege law is not in compliance with federal regulations.

By failing to reach a compromise, the legislature is endangering our children. We all know that removal of lead-based paint is critical for the positive mental development of our children.

The Governor and I will appeal the regional director's decision to Washington.

ON BACKGROUND:

1. Mississippi's audit privilege law was passed by MS legislature while Jimmy Palmer was head of DEQ.
2. The leadership of the house and the senate have not reached an agreement as called for by the Governor in his Oct. 11 letter, during the last special session.
3. The Governor stood ready to expand the call to include a compromise by the legislature on audit privilege had an agreement been reached.
4. Also, the Governor stood ready to call a special session had an agreement been reached.

Statement from Governor's Office:

"I am disappointed that the Mississippi Legislature could not reach agreement to protect the children of our state. However, I will appeal the regional director's decision to remove the lead-based paint program."