

JM Eagle introduces retroactive 50-year warranty

By Clare Goldsberry

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JM Eagle (Los Angeles, CA), announced that it is issuing what it says is an unprecedented 50-year warranty against manufacturing defects for its high-performance PVC and HDPE pipe products used in water transmission and distribution lines, as well as forced sewer mains. The new warranty comes as the company fights a "whistleblower" lawsuit that calls into question the quality of JM Eagle's pipe products.

The company says that this warranty is "unmatched by any other pipe manufacturer," and will take effect immediately for sales of all new pipe certified to American Water Works Assn. (AWWA) standards and produced by JM Eagle.

"JM Eagle's new warranty program sets a new industry standard for quality assurance," said JM Eagle VP of Operations Dave Slawson. "This warranty will give our customers, and most importantly, taxpayers, peace of mind about the integrity of our company and products."

Additionally, the warranty will retroactively cover plastic pipe products manufactured by JM Eagle and its predecessor J-M Manufacturing since original inception for all new pipe failures. No other pipe manufacturer has matched this claim, said the company.

"The original warranty was for one year, the industry standard, but we are retroactively applying the warranty to all pipe sold since original inception," said Marcus Galindo, a JM Eagle spokesman. "This means that if someone purchased pipe in 1983 from JM Manufacturing (now JM Eagle), they would be covered for manufactured defects until 2033."

We also feel this is a huge deal, particularly for the plastics industry as a whole. This gives anyone who specifies plastic pipe a sense of security knowing that it won't corrode, break down, or suffer from a break because of a manufacturing defect."

Responding in a telephone interview regarding the second amended complaint in which other JM Eagle employees stated that old equipment and an accelerated extrusion process created pipe that did not meet standards, Lanny Davis, attorney for JM Eagle said, "The employees' testimony reveals there are several issues here, none of which takes into account over \$350 million invested in the JM Eagle plants over the past 10 years. The acceleration of the extrusion process—when a plant is modernized—means the assembly line can be accelerated without affecting quality."

The other point, stated Davis, is that UL and the National Sanitary Foundation have been certifying the quality of JM Eagle's pipe every year, and "if there is any doubt that the quality of the pipe is affected by the age of the extruder or the speed of the extrusion process, then the UL and NSF would be wrong," explained Davis. "Either the relator is right or the UL and NSF are right. They can't both be right," he said.

JM Eagle's Slawson stated, "As many municipalities set out to repair their aging infrastructures with economic stimulus funds, they can take comfort in the fact that an investment into JM Eagle's pipe is one they will not have to repeat for at least another generation. This 50-year warranty verifies what we've been doing all along. JM Eagle stands by the quality of its products, only now it's on paper."

JM Eagle's comprehensive line of pipe products is certified by the nation's foremost independent agencies, including Underwriters Laboratories and National Sanitary Foundation International. Consequently, the company's plants and pipes are subjected to unannounced inspections and random testing by these agencies and others to ensure the quality of the products. JM Eagle's gross quality claim rate over the last 10 years is below 0.1%. —Clare

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