



**ASIAN PACIFIC
AMERICAN
LEGAL CENTER
OF
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA**

PRESS RELEASE

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CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS DENOUNCE INAPPROPRIATE USE OF RACE & ETHNICITY IN LAWSUIT AGAINST JM EAGLE

Los Angeles, CA – Today, nine civil rights and community leaders from the Asian Pacific American, Latino, African American and Jewish communities issued an open letter, deploring the inappropriate use of race and ethnicity in a lawsuit filed against JM Eagle, the world's leading manufacturer of PVC and plastic pipes. JM Eagle is owned by Walter Wang (Wang Wen Hsiang).

In the open letter, the community leaders, who all advocate against race-based discrimination, expressed concern that a number of racially insensitive statements have been made in a publicly filed legal document initiating a lawsuit against JM Eagle, alleging that the company sold nonconforming pipes to government entities. The civil rights leaders are not taking a position with respect to the merits of the litigation.

“Although race and ethnicity have absolutely nothing to do with the case, the plaintiff and his attorneys repeatedly interject gratuitous references to Asian ethnicity. For example, they allege that JM Eagle hired ‘Taiwanese nationals’ with ‘significantly less experience and fewer credentials’ than prior managers – yet ethnicity has no relevance to the issue of experience or credentials and in fact, no such identifiers are used to describe the former managers, only the new managers to whom the plaintiff objects,” said **Stewart Kwoh**, Executive Director of APALC and one of the signatories to the letter. “We are greatly disappointed in these attempts to use the ethnicity and nationality of JM Eagle's owners and employees as a weapon not only against JM Eagle, but against the greater Asian American community. Given the irrelevance of ethnicity and nationality to this case, we are concerned that such information has been included solely to stir racial intolerance.”

The signatories to the letter are: **John Chen**, Chairman, Committee of 100; **Craig Ishii**, Regional Director, Pacific Southwest District, Japanese American Citizens League; **Stewart Kwoh**, President and Executive Director, Asian Pacific American Legal Center; **Munson A. Kwok**, Immediate Past National President, Chinese American Citizens Alliance; **Don Nakanishi**, Professor Emeritus and Former Director of UCLA Asian American Studies Center; **Connie Rice**, Co-Director, Advancement Project; **Thomas Saenz**, President and General Counsel, Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund; **Amanda Susskind**, Pacific Southwest Regional Director, Anti-Defamation League; and **Arturo Vargas**, Executive Director, National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials.

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