

## ANNEX C

### Corporate Responses

The research presented in "Built on Repression" was drawn from publicly available sources or bills of lading available by subscription, which allowed the researchers to identify **risk** in PVC supply chains. All of the companies outside of China that are named in the report are downstream of companies that have sourced Xinjiang PVC, which increases the downstream companies' exposure to forced labor.

All companies named in "Built on Repression" were emailed to provide them the opportunity to contribute to the report findings. (Some emails bounced back and additional email addresses were attempted where available.) The research team invited Chinese companies to explain their relationship to the labor transfer programs and asked downstream corporations to indicate any relationship they have to the named Chinese suppliers and intermediary manufacturers and to describe efforts they have made to exclude Xinjiang products from supply chains. The research team cannot independently verify these claims, but we allowed companies an opportunity to address the risk identified in our research.

Below are the responses received to date. These responses will be updated as new information is received.

Last Updated: April 16 9am UK

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# INTERNATIONAL BRANDS AND DISTRIBUTORS

## SSI AERATION

**June 3, 2022**

Hello Laura,

We are customers of The Supreme Industries Ltd. in India, who manufacture PVC pipe and fittings and we have imported some of their products over the past couple of years into the United States.

Supreme attests that they stopped working with Xinjiang PVC resin in 2019 because they were mandated to do so by a change in Indian law. At that time there was a skirmish between Indian and Chinese troops at Ladakh, and as a result, Indian import rules were changed to prohibit many Chinese made goods from the Indian market.

I hope to have from Supreme some evidence of purchases from different vendors next week from Supreme, but I would encourage you to do more due diligence on the Indian vendors on your list, to ensure you don't have old information.

On the other hand, if you have proof that what Supreme is telling us is incorrect, we would like to know about it so that we can re-evaluate our position.

Best regards,

Tom Frankel  
Director

SSI Aeration, Inc.

**June 3, 2022**

**[in response to evidence provided by the researchers based on US customs data that Supreme Industries had received shipments from Xinjiang Zhongtai in 2021]**

Dear Laura,

Thank you for this. It's disturbing that the Panjiva data contradicts what they told us. We are not large enough to have a compliance officer but these days it seems every company needs one. In this case we will have to change vendors or ask them to change suppliers and provide documentation not just talking.

Best regards,  
Tom Frankel

## **DIAMOND W**

**June 6, 2022**

Dear Ms. Murphy,

Thank you for your email. First I want to reassure you that, we, at Diamond W, take the issue of forced labor very seriously and would never knowingly include products in our portfolio that were produced using forced labor or purchase products that include raw material that was produced in this manner.

We do not deal directly with factories in China. However, we do have US based suppliers that source in China and supply to us on DDP terms.

While we rely on the undertakings of our suppliers that the goods we receive comply with all applicable laws and standards, including the US Uyghur Forced Labor Prevention Act, our own desk based due diligence has confirmed that the products we receive comply fully with all laws and human rights standards. That due diligence has shown that none of our suppliers source from factories in the Xinjiang region and none of the factories they do source from secure raw materials from the chemical companies listed in your email. Notwithstanding, if you possess information that would contradict our conclusions, I would ask that you provide this to me immediately so we can identify our non-compliant supplier and take action to remove the products from our portfolio.

Thank you for your help.

Best regards,

Paul

Paul Walker,

President

**June 8, 2022**

**[in response to evidence provided by researchers based on shipping records and annual reports identifying Zhongtai as a supplier to Zhejiang Tianzhen]**

Hi Laura,

Thank you for your email and information. Per my previous email, our suppliers are all US based companies and Diamond W has no direct dealings in China and we have never heard of or had dealings with Zhejiang Tianzhen.

We have reached out to our suppliers again and each confirms they do not source from Zhenjiang Tianzhen.

The US Customs information you have reviewed could only have shown Diamond W as consignee, so perhaps you could share the shipper and importer of record information with me. This would help us in resolving the mystery as to how we are connected. We are determined to resolve the issue and therefore your help would be appreciated.

Best regards,

Paul

**Paul Walker**

President

**June 10, 2022**

**[in response to evidence provided by researchers showing Diamond W as importer of record for items indicating Zhejiang Tianzhen as consignee of record]**

Hi Laura,  
I hope all is well with you. Thank you for the file with the shipment information. I appreciate your help. We are quite shocked and of course concerned and have been in contact with the supplier in this regard. Can you let me know also how I can access your report once published. Thanks again.  
Best regards,  
Paul

**Paul Walker**  
President

**HOME DEPOT**  
**June 9, 2022**

Professor Murphy,  
Following a media inquiry our team received this week on a Sheffield report about Uyghur forced labor in vinyl flooring supply chains, I wanted to reach out to see if you're working on this report or could point us to the correct researcher.

We heard from the reporter that the report cites evidence that some of Home Depot's LVT flooring is at high risk of forced labor inputs. We believe these findings are inaccurate and potentially misleading and would like to address them with Sheffield before the report is published. We take this very seriously. Do you or your colleagues have availability today or tomorrow for a call to discuss this further? Anytime late or early is fine.

Regards,  
Ron Jarvis

**June 9, 2022**  
**[in response to researchers providing the initial letter sent to Home Depot on June 1, and requesting their confirmation of US customs records and the Home Depot website indicating that Home Depot sells Home Legend flooring that is made by Jufeng New Materials Vietnam]**

Laura,

Thank you for replying. Do you have a moment to discuss via phone or virtual video?

Ron Jarvis  
Chief Sustainability Officer

**June 10, 2022**

**[in response to a request to put their response in writing]**

Laura,

Thank you for your response. You asked whether Home Legend is a supplier of The Home Depot because you are preparing a report that will allege that certain of its product use PVC from Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region (XUAR). At The Home Depot we take any allegations of forced labor with the utmost importance. Home Legend is a supplier. We engaged with Home Legend and, after it conducted its own review, its senior leadership has confirmed to us in writing that our product does not, and has not, contained PVC from Xinjiang. More specifically, Zhejiang Tianzhen (parent company of Vietnam manufacturer Jufeng) has assured Home Legend that no PVC from the XUAR has been used in any Home Legend products sold to The Home Depot. On January 24, 2022, Tianzhen explicitly instructed all their PVC sourcing agents to cease purchasing PVC resin from the XUAR. However, as previously stated, no PVC from the XUAR was used in Home Legend products prior to that date.

We would like the opportunity to speak with you directly before you issue your report. Going forward, as you champion this cause, please do not hesitate to reach out to us for any insight we may provide.

Regards,  
Ron

**TRICON ENERGY LTD**

**January 29, 2024**

Dear Helena Kennedy Centre Team,

Thank you for your work on responsible sourcing and promoting awareness around forced labor issues. As an introduction, I lead sustainability for Tricon Energy, one of the companies referenced in the "Built on Repression" report and annex (<https://www.shu.ac.uk/helena-kennedy-centre-international-justice/research-and-projects/all-projects/built-on-repression>). We would like to clarify a few points from the report and welcome engagement on how companies can more positively contribute to improving working conditions and respect for human rights globally.

We recognize limited information may have been available to the research team. Although it is noted that companies listed were contacted, we are not aware of such communication and identified two concerns with the report, detailed below.

For the first, on page 27, the report notes: “By April of 2021, however, Pioneer Polyleathers began sourcing its PVC SG5 from chemical distribution company Tricon Energy in Texas, but the shipments originated in China, making it more difficult to trace who actually manufactured the PVC. However, because Tricon was the shipper of record for some Zhongtai products originating in the company’s Shengxiong factory, there is some risk that Pioneer Polyleathers could have sourced from Zhongtai.” We would like to clarify that the shipments made to Pioneer Polyleathers did not originate from Zhongtai or the Xinjiang region. We fully support the broader point that transactions globally may require additional due diligence and that transparency in the supply chain is important. As written, however, the report suggests something that is factually inaccurate.

Second, Annex A, which is independently available to download and appears separately in search results, does not include a date. It states: “The ‘Intermediary Manufacturer’ column lists any company that had sourced PVC or caustic soda from the Uyghur Region-based companies for manufacturing and export of flooring, pipes, or other products in the last two years.” It would help readers and promote more transparency and accuracy if a reference date for those two years was provided in the annex, including in the table. We did purchase from the region as noted in the annex but in April 2021, prior to sanctions and before the update to our human rights due diligence process. As written, the annex is not factually accurate, as we have not purchased PVC from the region in more than two years.

These items in the report affect our business as other companies rely on them as a source of factual information. We are requesting that Tricon’s name be removed from the report and annex, or that they be taken down until the items above are corrected.

At Tricon we have a robust due diligence process, and we comply with global sanctions and human rights laws and regulations. Our Responsible Sourcing Standard (available here: <https://www.triconenergy.com/media/st3pzuvv/responsible-sourcing-product-stewardship-standard-english.pdf>) outlines expectations for our business partners, and our Modern Slavery Statement (available here: <https://www.triconenergy.com/media/bvgbjfcd/modern-slavery-statement-2022-vf.pdf>) provides an overview of our processes. Our internal process for Sustainability Risk Management and Due Diligence includes additional measures that we take in our business operations. For example, we apply an onboarding process for all third parties which includes sanctions screening and monitoring and certifications that third parties must comply with sanctions, anti-corruption, and human rights laws and regulations. We also work closely with outside counsel to ensure that transactions are compliant with applicable laws.

Beyond compliance, we look to the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights for guidance, understanding that governments have a responsibility to protect human rights and that business must work to respect them. We also understand solutions do not rest with one company: We believe multistakeholder collaboration is an important part of addressing systemic human rights issues, particularly in complex operating environments and are continuously looking for ways to improve, not only our human rights due diligence, but also how we can contribute to a more positive impact overall.

We would appreciate if you could confirm the amendment or correction of the report before February 16, 2024. We can be reached at the below email and phone if you would like to have a call or if you have any further questions. I've also included Bryan Elwood in copy, our General Counsel and Chief Compliance Officer.

Thanks,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Carlson  
Sustainability



# INVESTMENT FUNDS

## Dimensional Fund Advisors

June 3, 2022

Dear Professor Murphy,

I received your e-mail to Dimensional Fund Advisors about allegations for forced labor against Zhongtai Chemical. I work with the investment stewardship group in the Asia Pacific region. Forced labor is a topic which we take quite seriously.

I believe we have not previously been made aware of forced labor allegations against this specific company in detail, so I have been reading through the attached materials trying to understand the situation of concern. However, I have not found any details specific to Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical in any searches of the PDF reports you provided.

Can you please direct me to the specific report and page reference that details your findings and the allegations against Zhongtai Chemical (and the sources) so that I can request more information from the board of the company about it? If I have more detail about precisely what the company has been accused of, I am more likely to be successful in any dialogue I'm able to initiate with them about the topic.

Thank you,

Emily

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Emily Cornell  
Senior Portfolio Manager and Vice President  
Dimensional Fund Advisors

## VANGUARD

June 10, 2020

Dear Professor Murphy:

Your email was forwarded to Vanguard's Investment Stewardship team, which conducts portfolio company engagement and proxy voting on behalf of Vanguard's equity index holdings. We can confirm that as of June 1, 2022, the Vanguard funds owned approximately \$7 million of Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical Co. shares. The Investment Stewardship team does have an established process to identify and monitor human rights abuses at portfolio companies. That process includes monitoring companies who operate in the region and whose products, services, suppliers, or business relationships may be linked to alleged

abuses. This [document](#) will provide you with more details on our Investment Stewardship program and our human rights policies.

Best Regards,

Christine A. Deery

Vanguard Investment Stewardship | Engagement / Administrative Coordinator

**CREDIT SUISSE**

**June 13, 2022**

Dear Laura,

Thank you for the additional details. Below please see Credit Suisse Asset Management's statement on this topic.

*Credit Suisse Asset Management:*

*Xinjiang Zhongtai Chemical Co. is a component of leading global indices such as MSCI Emerging Markets Index and MSCI China All Shares ESG Universal Index. These global indices are calculated by specialized index providers. Given the importance of such indices as benchmark for passive funds, clients of large asset managers hold shares in the underlying companies via the products in which they are invested.*

Best regards,  
Anitta

Anitta Tuure  
Media Relations

*Built on repression: PVC building materials' reliance on forced labor and environmental abuses in the Uyghur region*

MURPHY, Laura, VALLETTE, Jim and ELIMÄ, Nyrola

Available from the Sheffield Hallam University Research Archive (SHURA) at:

<https://shura.shu.ac.uk/30387/>

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