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Trial Over Petrik's Water Filters Begins

By Alexander Bratersky

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A Moscow court began hearings Thursday on a lawsuit against inventor Viktor Petrik on accusations that he developed and promoted water filters that were ineffective and potentially harmful.

The lawsuit against the Golden Formula company, which is owned by Petrik, a friend and protege of United Russia leader Boris Gryzlov, was filed in July by the Consumer Rights Protection Society, the group's spokeswoman, Yulia Sharapova, said Thursday.

The next hearing at the Perovsky District Court is scheduled for Oct. 18, the judicial news web site RAPSI said.

A study conducted by ROSA, an independent Moscow-based water control center, found Petrik's filters to be ineffective, Sharapova said.

She said the watchdog reviewed the filters after receiving a complaint from the Council of Native Novgorod Residents, a public group.

In 2009, Novgorod became the test region for a United Russia-endorsed program to install Petrik's water filters in every school nationwide.

Anna Cherepanova, a member of the Council of Native Novgorod Residents, said the group decided to complain after the Russian Academy of Sciences said in the spring that Petrik's filters use harmful materials.

“This experiment on our children should be stopped,” she said by telephone.

Cherepanova added that Petrik's filters have been installed in most of the region's public schools and kindergartens.

Petrik was not available for the comment Thursday. In an earlier interview with The Moscow Times, he said his filters helped to reduce sicknesses among local children. “I have done it for the future,” he said.

The Consumer Rights Protection Society also complained over Petrik's decision to name one of filters “Shoigu” in honor of Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu, saying the inventor was not authorized to use the minister's name to endorse the product, Ekho Moskvy radio reported Thursday.

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