



January 6, 2010

Mr. Brian Berringer
Environmental Protection Agency

Subject: Enhanced Program Plan for Energy Star Products

Dear Mr. Berringer,

Please accept this letter as Chelsea Building Products, Inc. comments regarding the above subject matter. Chelsea Building Products, Inc. is a leading designer and supplier of energy efficient PVC window and door designs. Our customers are local and regional window and door manufacturers who sell their products to both the replacement and new construction segments, as well as through multiple channels of distribution.

Since its inception, the Energy Star Program has been a "bell weather" indicator to the consumer, identifying products which will not only conserve energy but save them money whether in operating or energy costs. When NFRC (National Fenestration Rating Council) was formed, it was heralded as an example of how industry and government could cooperate in developing methods and standards which could be marketed alone or used to support the entry of fenestration products into the Energy Star Program. As consumer requirements for higher performing products increase, Energy Star and the products that support it have kept pace. The program has worked to accomplish what it was set out to do. Create consumer awareness, promote product innovation and conserve energy.

With that said, we now come to the task at hand which is to comment on the Enhanced Program Plan. Here are a few comments I would like to share with you in relation to the information presented in the December 2, 2009 document.

Section 4: Frequent updates to Energy Star criteria.

1. Specifications will be set to identify the top 25% most efficient models.

We ask that information contained in the NFRC database be used in determining these products.

2. Product shipment data collected from manufacturers.

We ask that information come from data collected from current information sources rather than putting undo burden on the manufacture to report and to maintain confidentiality.

3. Specifications to be reviewed for possible revision at a minimum every 3 years.

Current product life cycle is a minimum 5 years. Time to develop new products takes years, not months. Market research, product engineering, technology development, material development, product testing and certification and the "tooling" to supply components and produce a finished product all take time. The cost to develop new products and support programs; from component supplier to fabricator to the distribution network is **millions of dollars** throughout the distribution channel.

CHELSEA, member of TESSENDERLO GROUP

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Chelsea Building Products is currently developing products to meet the future R-5 requirements. The issue is, the time required to develop and commercialize a product and the unknown as to whether the government will in fact require this performance rating. If we, our customers and their customers take a risk based upon what we think may happen, if we are all wrong, could have a catastrophic effect on our businesses and the economy.

When ARRA came into effect and the tax credit for using products performing to the 30/30 requirement was established, there was a massive industry effort to meet these requirements. Millions of dollars were spent in product development, testing and recertification to support the governments requirements. And, because of the time frame required and the expense, many companies couldn't take advantage of the opportunity or went out of business because they weren't given sufficient time to prepare. If the existing changes to the Energy Star Program would have been followed, the industry and the American consumer would have been better served.

4. Revised Specification Completions

Recommend shareholders in this process include industry representation from trade organizations such as AAMA, WDMA, NGA, IGMA

Section 5: Enhanced testing procedure review, improvement and development

1. Products not covered by Federal Standards, the Energy Star program, make use of testing protocols developed by standards bodies.

Refer to ASTM as well as standards established by NFRC, AAMA/WDMA

Section 6: Enhanced product verification, testing and enforcement

1. Comprehensive Verification Testing.

Already exists for fenestration products under current NFRC and AAMA/WDMA certification process.

Section 7: Development of quality installation programs in key product areas

1. Many product categories will be evaluated to determine the need for improved installation procedures.

Installation procedures already exist. Whether developed by the manufacturer, dictated by state and local building codes or reference standards developed by stakeholders through ASTM's process.

Section 8: Top-tier program (Super Star)

Comment: This addition to the program is intended to advance products and technologies. Since the fenestration industry is so fragmented from a product specification standpoint, it would be anti-competitive for the government to invest taxpayer dollars with select private companies to develop. We recommend working with 3rd party stakeholders such as trade associations which have a vested interest in the industry and not one particular product or technology.



In conclusion, we hope you find these comments useful. Our industry is already regulated whether by national, state or local building and energy codes. Our products and technologies are continuously evolving to meet the needs of the market place. We have worked harmoniously with the DOE in the past in the creation of NFRC and continue to participate in the process to make the Energy Star Program relevant. We ask that with the EPA taking over responsibility for the program that they do not add undo regulation and cost to our products which may have a negative impact on the American consumer.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gary L. Hartman", is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Gary L. Hartman
Marketing & Business Development Manager
Chelsea Building Products, Inc.