



April 30, 2010

To: Doug Anderson, EPA
Richard Karney, DOE

Re: Proposed Energy Star Window, Door & Skylight Verification Testing
Pages: 2

Dear Mr. Anderson and Mr. Karney:

This letter is in regards to the EPA/DOE interest in market verification testing of window, door and skylight products for Energy Star. We were part of the conference call that was held on Wednesday, March 31, 2010 as well as the discussions during the Spring NFRC meeting.

We agree with many of the points that have been brought forward to the EPA/DOE and would like to work with you to find a resolution along with our fellow industry representatives. The following points are supported throughout the management of Milgard and represent our multiple manufacturing plants throughout the US.

- 1) While we understand the reasoning behind the desire to have verification testing (to prevent fraudulent activity), we believe that due to the strict nature of certification through NFRC, this is not common or widespread within the window and door industry. NFRC requires both simulations as well as a physical test for all products certified. In addition, there are inspection agencies such as Associated Laboratories, Incorporated (that Milgard uses) that make regular visits twice per year to each of our production facilities to inspect the products to make sure that they conform to both AAMA and NFRC requirements.
- 2) In order for the EPA/DOE to perform verification testing, products would have to be purchased through a variety of outlets such as Big Box, dealers, builders, retro-fit installers and direct from the manufacturer. Most of Milgard's products that are sold are only built once the order is placed and we do not stock product internally. In addition, Milgard has some products that are only made in the regions they are sold as well as some products manufactured only in select regional plants and shipped to other plants where they are not built. Many of our products such as aluminum and fiberglass products are not stocked at retail stores.
- 3) According to the call, the burden of testing would fall on the manufacturer. Proposals have been made that this testing is traded for other testing that is already being completed. Milgard is not in favor of paying for testing that is redundant. The cost burden of testing has been increasing year over year due to the increasing interest in improving energy performance and the increasing requirements of NFRC and the

EPA/DOE for things like insulated glass certification and more stringent Energy Star requirements.

- 4) For verification testing to be even close to the simulated values used in the certification the product tested would certainly have to be the same size as simulated (which do not necessarily match common or stock sizes). In addition, the current verification testing performed for the NFRC certification has a +/-10% allowance from the simulated values. Many times window reinforcement, frame styles and glazing options are grouped and the worst case value is printed on the label and listed on the NFRC website. This too could cause discrepancies between the EPA/DOE verification test and the NFRC certification. The NFRC thermal values are meant for comparison between products and are not thermal values of the actual windows being sold unless it is of the exact size certified.
- 5) The last point of concern has to do with the overloading of the test labs. This was brought up on the conference call and the EPA/DOE answer was that the labs will adapt. More labs will spring up like when NFRC was formed and the various increasing demands over the years. While this may be true in the longer term, we have found that labs will wait for enough sustained demand and they are somewhat slow to respond to increased demand by adding staff and equipment. Large backlogs could occur which will hinder Milgard's ability to get product certification and R&D simulations completed. We have already witnessed this with the increased importance on thermal performance due to more stringent Energy Star values and the Energy Conservation Incentives of the 2009 American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

It is our belief that the stringent requirements for NFRC certification and current independent inspection fulfills the need for verification testing by the EPA/DOE and no other testing is necessary. However, if the EPA/DOE wishes to move forward with the verification testing, we ask that a full plan be laid out for review and that the issues mentioned above are considered. We would also ask that this verification testing be in place of or as a part of some other thermal verification testing already being performed so that window, door and skylight companies are not required to carry the burden of more cost or backlog at the test labs. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input for the proposal and ask that you keep us in the loop on all decisions made.

Best regards,



Kevin Vilhauer
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Milgard Corporate Engineering