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Press release

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UK Firms Unprepared for CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme Claims Survey by Solar Gard®

*Ignorance, Apathy and Confusion Abounds Amongst UK's Largest
Energy Users as New Scheme Risks Stumbling at First Hurdle*

London, UK – The Government's new Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme is set for a rocky start when it launches on April 1st 2010, according to research published today.

The scheme is the UK's mandatory climate change and energy saving initiative. It is central to the UK's strategy for improving energy efficiency and reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions, as set out in the Climate Change Act 2008. Around 5,000 organisations are expected to qualify for the scheme this year and all must comply legally with the scheme or face financial and other penalties.

However, a recent survey of senior managers responsible for energy management at many of the UK's biggest energy users highlights a staggering degree of ignorance, apathy and confusion about the scheme. The survey was originally undertaken for Solar Gard, an energy control window film specialist, to understand the attitudes of the UK's largest energy users towards reducing their carbon footprint.

Over half (53%) of the UK's biggest energy users likely to be affected by the scheme do not even realise that they will be affected and that they are required by law to register. If they do not register by the deadline of September 30 they face an immediate fine of £5,000 and an additional daily fine of £500. A single organisation that misses the deadline by a month will face a £20,000 fine. If 53% of the 5,000 organisations affected by the scheme miss the deadline by a month, they will collectively accumulate a first month fine of more than £50,000,000.

Other findings from the survey support the view that ignorance, apathy and confusion reigns among many large UK organisations when it comes to their energy use.

- A third (33%) of those surveyed whose organisation almost certainly qualifies for the scheme did not know what their annual energy usage was, despite this being the basic metric for qualifying for the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme.
- Nearly half (45%) of those who know that they qualify for the scheme do not know when they are supposed to register.
- Unsurprisingly, the survey highlighted that more than a quarter (28%) of the UK's largest energy users who qualify for the scheme do not have a carbon footprint reduction strategy in place.
- Meanwhile, almost every organisation (97%) admitted they could do more to reduce their carbon footprint. Despite this honesty, almost half (48%) of those qualifying for the scheme either have no plans, or are waiting to be told what to do, to reduce their carbon footprint.
- Finally, indicating that almost no one knew what the financial impact of being in the scheme would entail, only five percent could correctly give the official price the scheme had placed on a one ton CO₂ allowance. The correct answer is £12.

Commenting on the findings, Ian Penfold, Solar Gard's solar control window film expert, said: "Such a lax approach by UK organisations to the climate change issue illustrates the need for enforced legislation. But there's clearly been too much hot air around the CRC, and not enough cool action. Organisations across the UK, big and small, should take ownership for cutting their carbon footprint. The UK may have taken the lead in Europe to deliver climate change legislation, but we face huge embarrassment if, collectively, we fall at the first hurdle."

The survey was carried out by research company Vanson Bourne. The survey interviewed senior facility managers responsible for power management at 100 of the UK's largest public and private sector organisations, most of whom are likely to qualify for the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme.

Solar Gard was looking to use data from the survey to understand the attitudes of the UK's largest energy users towards reducing their carbon footprint. The survey helped reveal some of the most common strategies being used by large organisations to reduce their energy usage.

The most popular steps were also the simplest and ranged from turning off lights and IT equipment to opening windows rather than using fans or air-conditioning. The least common approach listed was solar control window film

that can reject solar energy from the sun and help keep a building cool, reducing the need for air-conditioning.

Although Solar Control window film can cut a building's cooling load by 30 percent, and reduce accordingly the energy required to air-condition the building, less than a quarter (23%) of organisations surveyed have installed it.

The survey showed that of the majority (97%) that relied on air conditioning to cool their buildings, over half would still open a window to cool down on a hot day. This suggests that the air conditioning was not working effectively against the solar heat gained by the building.

For the duration of the registration period of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) Energy Efficiency Scheme, April 1-September 30, Solar Gard is offering free glazing energy analysis, a first step in measuring precisely the reduction in solar heat gain through the installation of solar control window film along with the subsequent reduction in carbon emissions required to power the air conditioning.

About Bekaert Specialty Films

Bekaert Specialty Films LLC, www.bekaertfilms.com, develops, manufactures and distributes window films that provide solar control, safety, security, glare reduction, energy saving and CO₂ emission reduction solutions. The company's films are sold in 60 countries under the Solar Gard®, Panorama®, Quantum® and Solar Gard® Armorcoat® brands. Bekaert Specialty Films also manufactures films for the photovoltaic, electronics, medical, graphic arts and imaging, automotive and aerospace industries. Bekaert Specialty Films is strongly committed to environmental responsibility and has been recognized by the Clinton Climate Initiative and other energy experts. Headquartered in San Diego, California, Bekaert Specialty Films is a subsidiary of Bekaert (Euronext Brussels: BEKB), a global company headquartered in Belgium with annual combined sales of €3.3 billion, more than \$4 billion.

More information on professionally-installed Solar Gard window film is available at www.solargard.co.uk . For media inquiries, samples or photography, contact solargard@touchdownpr.com.

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