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REFLECTING ON WHITE COATINGS ENERGY SAVINGS FOR ROOFS

Washington, DC (August 14, 2009) – Energy Efficiency proponents and regulators need to discard the outdated idea that white is the only color for a “cool” roof, and recognize that many of the newer high-reflectivity aluminum and colored roof coatings can perform just as well or better than white, says the Roof Coatings Manufacturers Association (RCMA).

“There’s a full complement of highly reflective roofing systems today that meet the energy efficiency and sustainability goals for commercial and residential buildings,” says Tom Meyer of RCMA’s Solar Reflective Coatings Council. “In the past few years, technological advances have rapidly moved the roof coating industry beyond white to include a multitude of high performing colored coatings and silver aluminum bituminous coatings.”

While reflective roof coatings can reduce energy consumption or increase roof life for buildings with low-sloped or flat roofs, Meyer said optimal energy efficiency and sustainability require looking at more than just a whiteness factor.

“Selecting the appropriate roofing system requires a thorough consideration of climate, a building’s location, installation specifics, aesthetics, insulation and other factors,” adds Meyer. “There’s no single answer. White may be the solution for one building, with an aluminum or colored coating the best choice for another.”

White roofs were in the headlines recently, when Energy Secretary Steven Chu suggested painting the roofs of all buildings white to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and save energy used for cooling. Chu’s statements were criticized in many camps for ignoring energy and other offsetting factors and costs in non-temperate climes.

“The benefits of reflective roof coatings are very real, but there needs to be a reasoned approach and an understanding that there are many coating types available to meet the nation’s various building energy and sustainability objectives,” said James Baker, RCMA’s director of industry affairs. “We’re urging regulators and green building advocates to be cautious and not increase reflectivity requirements faster than the technology will allow,” he added.

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The Roof Coatings Manufacturers Association (RCMA) is the national trade association representing manufacturers of cold-applied protective roof coatings and cements, and their suppliers. RCMA is committed to continually improving the performance and quality of roofing.