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PV CERTIFICATION: IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF RENEWABLE TECHNOLOGY

TEMPE, AZ and NEWTOWN, CT/February 12, 2010 — In an important decision, The Solar America Board for Codes and Standards (Solar ABCs, www.solarabcs.org) recommended the adoption of IEC quality standards for all modules purchased in the U.S. marketplace. The aim of this initiative is to improve the quality and reliability of the photovoltaic technology in the U.S. marketplace.

This effort takes foundational steps to protect consumers and businesses alike from unknowingly buying poor quality photovoltaic (PV) modules, including those rejected by testing and certification officials in other countries. Both the European Union and Asia already require this testing on all photovoltaic technology being sold in their marketplace.

This is a first step in developing a sustainable marketplace for renewable solar technologies. It is in the market's long-term best interest to take basic steps to keep poor-quality solar energy equipment from flooding the U.S. market.

Independent third-party testing and certification of basic quality helps provide an important consumer protection safeguard to build a sustainable technological base, according to Mr. Matthias Heinze, Director of Technology of TÜV Rheinland PTL, LLC, North America's largest solar photovoltaic testing center. Mr. Heinze encourages PV manufacturers to embrace the new policy, designed to positively affect the quality and longevity of the U.S. solar market.

“TÜV Rheinland PTL vigorously supports and endorses Solar ABCs' recommendation to establish minimum quality and reliability requirements in the U.S.,” said Mr. Heinze. “Third-party, independent testing and

certification helps remove substandard PV modules from the market, effectively raising the overall quality levels of equipment being sold.”

This month Solar ABCs, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Energy, released its Policy Recommendations #1 for standard PV modules and systems: *Recommended Standards for PV Modules and Systems*. The group advocates PV manufacturers to have their modules independently tested and certified for minimum quality and reliability according to the following international qualification standards: IEC 61215 (crystalline silicon flat plate modules), IEC 61646 (thin film flat plate modules) and IEC 62108 (concentrator modules/assemblies). These standards are considered minimum requirements in Europe.

Today, the U.S. marketplace does not require solar panels or photovoltaic modules to undergo independent testing for durability, quality or reliability claims. Yet, other parts of the world, especially Europe and Asia, require scrutiny through an independent third-party testing provider.

Mr. Heinze says the new recommendation promotes widespread adoption of minimum standards for quality and reliability among solar technologies. “Without this policy,” explained Mr. Heinze, “the quality of solar equipment could continue to decline, negatively impacting the U.S. PV market and increasing the levelized cost of electricity.”

Currently, a segment of PV manufacturers request third-party testing, explained Mr. Heinze. He predicts demand for independent testing and certification will shift to consumer-oriented businesses involved in power purchase agreements, banking, insurance, and system integration, as well as homeowners and business owners.

About TÜVRheinland PTL, LLC®

TÜVRheinland Photovoltaic Testing Laboratory® is a proud part of the TUV Rheinland family of companies. The company delivers premier independent certification, testing, and assessment services for the solar energy industry sectors including photovoltaic, solar thermal, power management. For more information, visit www.tuvptl.com.

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