



## **How Do You Protect Your Solar, Wind or Energy Efficiency Investment? New Coalition Says Start Asking for Quality Credentialed People, Products and Programs**

(Solar Power International, Chicago, IL, October 23, 2013) Groundbreaking growth in renewable energy and energy efficiency industries makes it more important than ever that consumers, energy incentive programs and industry can distinguish people, products and programs that meet the highest standards for quality, safety and efficiency. In response, a group of well-established, nationally accredited credentialing organizations announces the formation of a unique Clean Energy Credentialing Coalition (CECC).

The coalition includes the Interstate Renewable Energy Council, Inc. (IREC), Building Performance Institute, Inc. (BPI), Solar Rating & Certification Corporation™ (SRCC), The North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) and Small Wind Certification Council (SWCC). They have joined together to demonstrate and promote the collective importance of third-party quality assessment, and the value it brings to building strong and competent renewable energy and energy efficiency markets. The coalition's formation was announced last October at Solar Power International (SPI), the solar energy industry's most powerful, comprehensive educational conference and product exhibition at McCormick Place in Chicago.

The Clean Energy Credentialing Commission is creating a campaign to build awareness of the value of credentialing – particularly as a distinguishing tool for consumers, energy incentive programs, employers and industry. A quality credential is a mark of excellence that can boost consumer confidence in renewable energy and energy efficiency professionals, products and programs. A new landing page introduces the coalition and the campaign. [www.CLEANENERGYCREDENTIALS.ORG](http://www.CLEANENERGYCREDENTIALS.ORG)

The goal of the campaign is to educate, enlighten and elevate interest in the benefits associated with clean energy credentialing – from consumers and educators, to manufacturers and government decision makers.

“United in the pursuit of quality, safety and efficiency, the coalition will work to encourage consumers and other stakeholders to look for credentialed renewable energy and energy efficiency professionals and products,” explains coalition member Larry Zarker, of the Building Performance Institute (BPI).

As employers look to hire certified technicians who were trained by accredited education and training programs, the full circle that instills confidence in a quality workforce and industry then begins to close.

“Quality is invisible. Mistakes are not,” says Jane Weissman, president/CEO of the Interstate Renewable Energy Council (IREC) on the importance of standards, credentialing and third-party assessment. “The strength of this group is the collective commitment to better workmanship, better products and better training.” She adds: “It is evident that the renewable energy and energy efficiency

industries place high value on raising the bar for quality assurances.”

Recognized quality credentials send a strong signal that a rigorous standard has been met, offering a mark of distinction that strengthens the credential holder. Consumers can look for products that are certified for quality and safety, and credentialed professionals trained for appropriate, effective, safe installation and service. Together they ensure that once products are installed, they do what they were intended to do, save or create energy.

Educational programs can use accreditation to improve enrollment in light of a competitive training market. Installers of solar systems, weatherization products and other home energy efficiency retrofit work can set themselves apart from others who are less qualified. And clean energy programs that provide financial incentives to consumers have an added assurance of safety, performance and reliability to justify their investment.

“For customers to be happy and the industry to thrive, quality must be central to every aspect of renewables and efficiency,” adds Richard Lawrence, executive director of the North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP). “To have a solar system successfully operate for decades, the components must be reliable and perform as promised, and they must be installed properly by competent personnel. Respected credentialing organizations assure that customers are getting the quality they expect.”

“Credentialing is the best tool we have to instill confidence in clean energy products and professionals,” says Jim Huggins, technical director of the Solar Rating & Certification Corporation™ (SRCC). “Certification has filtered out inferior products that were unable to improve.”

“As consumers are gaining more confidence in clean energy industries, certification is helping to expand the market and ensure growth for the future,” adds Larry Sherwood, chair of the Small Wind Certification Council (SWCC).

Eileen Prado of the SRCC adds one more note for perspective: “Whether we're looking at credentialed people, products or programs, increasing renewable energy and energy efficiency is another way to increase American jobs and our nation’s energy independence.”

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**IREC** is the leading credentialing body for training providers and instructors in the energy efficiency and renewable energy industry. An accredited American National Standards Developer, and national director of the Solar Instructor Training Network, IREC leads national efforts to ensure that the clean energy workforce is highly skilled and trained to meet employer needs. ([www.irecusa.org](http://www.irecusa.org))

**BPI** is the nation's premier standards development and credentialing organization for residential energy efficiency retrofit work, leading the development of industry-defining home performance retrofit standards for the past 20 years. BPI's national protocols help reduce risks associated with government incentive programs and increase accountability for the industry and homeowner. ([www.bpi.org](http://www.bpi.org))

**SRCC** is the leading certification organization for solar thermal collectors and solar thermal water heating systems. “The industry standard since 1980,” the broadly recognized SRCC seal ensures that these energy efficiency products do what they were intended to do when installed – save energy. ([www.solar-rating.org](http://www.solar-rating.org))

**NABCEP** is widely recognized as the “gold standard” for credentialing renewable energy professionals, including for PV (photovoltaic) and solar heating installation and PV technical sales. NABCEP offers both certification and certificate programs throughout North America. ([www.nabcep.org](http://www.nabcep.org))

**SWCC** certifies small wind turbines, with consumer-friendly labels that make consistent energy generation comparisons and confirm product safety. SWCC certification ratings promote accurate comparison shopping and advance mainstream acceptance of small wind technology to serve increasing demands for distributed generation. ([www.solarwindcertification.org](http://www.solarwindcertification.org))

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