

## House Bill on Energy Efficiency Could Impact Commercial Glass Usage

The United States House of Representatives passed House Bill (HB) 3221, Renewable Energy and Energy Conservation Tax Act of 2007 on August 4. Some of the bill's proposals aimed at modernizing the country's energy infrastructure could eventually have an impact on the use of glass in commercial buildings. Among the bill's provisions are:

- A 30-percent reduction in energy use from the 2004 American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air-Conditioning Engineers (ASHRAE) standard 90.1 for commercial buildings by 2010;
- A 50-percent reduction of the same

by 2020; and

- That 100-percent of all commercial building be zero-net energy by 2050.

Part 4, section 9044 establishes the zero-energy commercial buildings initiative. The goal of the initiatives is to "periodically study and refine a national goal to reduce commercial building energy use and achieve zero-net-energy commercial buildings."

Among several high-performance green building practices, the bill recommends further research into the relationships between health and occupant productivity and natural daylighting, among other things.

The bill also lists incentives to improve commercial building energy efficiency. Among the incentives are trade-in programs for the early retirement of low-efficiency commercial building system components, including windows.

### DHS Warns Employers of Illegal Immigrants

On August 10, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) issued a regulation that outlines the specific steps an employer should take if that employer receives a "no-match" letter from the Social Security Administration informing the employer that there is an employee who is not authorized to work in the United States.

According to an announcement made by DHS secretary Michael Chertoff, the Employment Eligibility Verification System is a voluntary program that allows employers to check the work status of their employees online, using a computer-based tool. The tool, E-Verify, tells employers whether the particular document matches the Social Security number and whether both of those are genuine. If a discrepancy exists, a "no-match" letter will be sent to the employer.

Within 30 days of getting a no-match letter, the business will be required to check their records to make sure the discrepancy isn't an administrative error, and the employee must be asked to confirm the accuracy of the information. If the problem cannot be resolved within 90 days, and the employee has no evidence that they are authorized to work in the United States, the employee must be fired. If the employer does not work to resolve the problem, they may be held liable and face stiff penalties.

The regulation has been delayed, however, by litigation. ■

### SAFTI Files Lawsuit

San Francisco-based O'Keeffe's Inc. has filed a lawsuit against Anemostat in Carson, Calif., Technical Glass Products (TGP) in Kirkland, Wash., and Pilkington PLC, a U.K.-based company, for patent infringement of its SuperLite I-W, a CPSC Category II safety-rated wired glass product. The suit alleges that each defendant currently markets and/or sells a product identical to the patented SuperLite I-W, which is marketed and sold by SAFTI FIRST, a division of O'Keeffe's.

The complaint, *5:07-cv-03535-JF O'Keeffe's Inc. v. Technical Glass Products Anemostat and Pilkington, PLC*, was filed July 06, 2007, in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. According to the document, "Defendant TGP fabricates, markets and sells a product known as PyroShield NT which infringes on the O'Keeffe Patent."

The document also contends that Pilkington provides the wired glass used by TGP used in the fabrication and manufacture of the PyroShield product, in addition to marketing and selling PyroShield NT.

The complaint further alleges, "Anemostat fabricates, markets and/or sells a product it fabricates known as SAFE-Wire which infringes the O'Keeffe Patent."

"Even though there's growing concern among American manufacturers over patent infringement by foreign competitors, we are especially concerned about the infringement by other U.S. companies within the fire-rated glazing industry seeking to benefit from our product development efforts," says Bill O'Keeffe, president and chief executive officer of SAFTI FIRST.

No representatives from TGP, Pilkington or Anemostat would comment on the case.