

VI Responds to the Metropolis magazine article - "The Vinyl Question"

Letter to the Editors - Rebuttal to "The Vinyl Question", as printed in Metropolis Magazine, October 2007 Issue

Following are two letters on the highly inaccurate article – "The Vinyl Question" – in the October issue of *Metropolis*, a design publication. The Vinyl Institute's letter-to-the-editor was sent to the magazine, and the letter by Lonseal, Inc. was posted online in the comments section of the article.

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Nov. 1, 2007

Letters to the Editor
Metropolis
61 West 23rd St.
New York, NY 10010

Dear Editor:

Your editorial, "The Vinyl Question" (October), failed to report the fundamental conclusion of the U.S. Green Building Council's PVC report that PVC building products can have less overall impact than products of alternative materials. Nor did you include any of the government-sourced data that I shared on the vinyl industry's track record protecting workers, communities and the environment.

Vinyl was vilified repeatedly without regard to the equal or greater impacts from competing materials and activities. For example, the article pointed to vinyl as a dioxin source, but EPA's top-10 sources list does not even include vinyl. And, here's a conundrum: how is it that since the 1980s dioxin emissions have declined more than 90 percent while vinyl production and use have soared?

Metropolis does not serve its readers well with unquestioning acceptance of the misleading rhetoric of pressure groups. As for companies claiming to be "PVC-free," they should be asked for their published, peer-reviewed life-cycle data comparing their products with similar products made of PVC. If they can't or won't provide it, they are simply green-washing -- and potentially running afoul of Federal Trade Commission rules against false and misleading environmental marketing claims.

Why, the editorial asked, is so much PVC still being sold and used? Perhaps well-informed design professionals, specifiers, building owners and consumers have eschewed the misinformation and learned that vinyl, mostly derived from common salt, using less energy and releasing less CO2 than many competing materials, can be the lowest-impact choice. Most likely, they also know of vinyl products' durability, reliability, aesthetics, low initial cost, ease of installation, ease of maintenance, resource efficiency, flame resistance, slip resistance, chemical resistance, ability to reduce spread of pathogens, and other benefits.

Sincerely,
Allen Blakey
Sr. Director, Public Affairs

October 2007 • Metropolis Magazine

The Right Materials: The Vinyl Question

Mainstream science and environmental groups have lambasted it, green customers and -clients shun it, and companies are scrambling for alternatives. So why is PVC still so ubiquitous?

By Michael Silverberg

Posted October 17, 2007

Why is vinyl/PVC continuing to be put under intense heat for its perceived negative effects on the environment? Recent findings – few of which are referenced in this article – prove just the opposite is true: vinyl/PVC should not be held responsible for releasing unhealthy pollutants and compromising indoor air quality.

Along with the U.S. Green Building Council's (USGBC) decision to withdraw previous statements that using vinyl/PVC should result in negative LEED credit, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission and the National Institute of Health have also recently affirmed the carcinogenic risk of vinyl is "extremely low" and poses no threat to people or the environment. The bottom-line is this: vinyl can be green.

More than ever, it is essential to continue raising environmental consciousness to new heights, while simultaneously reducing our environmental footprint – and it's important to note that vinyl is part of eco-friendly efforts for doing so. I encourage and applaud everyone – designers, manufacturers, consumers, and even media alike – who are doing their part to ensure a more environmentally responsible future by helping to eliminate misconceptions that hinder positive strides in sustainability.

Tak Abe, Vice President of Sales and Marketing, Lonseal, Inc.

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