



The Ashkin Group

News Release
For immediate release
November 5, 2009

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Ashkin E-Alert

Urgent Action is Needed to Support EPA's DfE program.

New York State's Office of General Services (NYS OGS) is amending its Guidelines and criteria for "environmentally-sensitive cleaning and maintenance products" to be used in New York schools, state agencies, and public authorities.

Unfortunately, their draft does not accept the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Design for the Environment (DfE) program.

This makes it difficult for DfE partners to supply products to these entities and reduces options for purchasers.

Additionally, the draft eliminates a very valuable DfE program, which continues to develop important tools to help us solve complex problems, such as childhood asthma and other health and environmental issues.

Because of this, Stephen Ashkin, president of The Ashkin Group, is making a personal appeal for those concerned with this issue to send a letter or email to NYS OGS requesting DfE be included in their program.

Some of the reasons Ashkin believes this is so important, which can be addressed in your email or letter, are the following:

- DfE now has a clear and transparent standard and the DfE process is equal and, in some cases, superior to other ecolabels in its ability to reduce exposures to children and other vulnerable populations, as well as to the environment.
- DfE now has a system for product verification which Ashkin believes is superior to the other ecolabellers because it uses independent third-parties to do the verification—eliminating any potential or perceived conflict of interests between the standard setter and the verifier.

- DfE now includes very specific product performance requirements that are equal to, if not superior, compared to other ecolabelling programs.
- The inclusion of DfE would add another compliance path and thus create more competition, which could help reduce the costs for cleaning products for New York State schools, state agencies, and public authorities.

Ashkin says that e-mail comments should be sent to: nysogsesu@ogs.state.ny.us

Written comments can be mailed to:

New York State Office of General Services
Environmental Services Unit
39th Floor, Corning Tower
Empire State Plaza
Albany, NY 12242

Further, all correspondence must be submitted by November 20th, 2009.

More information about the NYS OGS Guidelines can be found at:

<https://greencleaning.ny.gov/DraftGuidelines.asp>.

Steve Ashkin is available for interviews, presentations, and commentary on Green Cleaning-related issues, sustainable buildings, industry trends, and facility management. He may be reached by calling (812) 332-7950.

About Stephen Ashkin and The Ashkin Group

Stephen P. Ashkin is president of The Ashkin Group, a consulting firm specializing in greening the cleaning industry, as well as Sustainability Tool LLC, an electronic dashboard that allows jansan companies to measure, track and report on their facility's environmental impacts, He is also coauthor of both The Business of Green Cleaning and Green Cleaning for Dummies.

Ashkin has worked in the cleaning industry since 1981 and has held senior management positions in leading consumer and commercial product companies. He began his work on Green Cleaning in 1990 and today is thought of as the "father of Green cleaning". For more information, visit www.AshkinGroup.com.