

PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Thomas Johnston, President IHPA

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Florida Takes Bold Stand to Protect the Consumer of Hurricane Protection Products

June 29, 2011 — Thomas Johnston, President of the International Hurricane Protection Association (IHPA), announced today that the IHPA applauds Florida lawmakers for moving forward with legislation (Florida HB 849) to protect consumers purchasing hurricane protection products in the State of Florida. The new law, effective July 1, 2011 makes it a violation of the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act, to advertise, sell, offer, provide, distribute or market any product as hurricane, windstorm or impact resistant unless it is in compliance with the provisions for product approval in the Florida Building Code.

For many years, the IHPA has been expressing industry concern to consumers and government authorities about the growing trend of untested and unapproved products being marketed as hurricane and windstorm protection. Johnston pointed out that advertising would often highlight the benefits of the product without ever mentioning that it could not meet the *minimum* test standards set forth in the Florida or International Building Codes. Often the advertising has been cleverly created to fool the consumer. “If you see pictures of windblown palm trees, satellite images of hurricanes and wording such as – ‘protection against severe weather’, what is the consumer to think?” Johnston stated that advertisers would imply hurricane protection and hide behind the claim that they did not actually state it.

In 2008, the IHPA began a consumer protection campaign called “Get the Number”. Through press releases, flyers, and buttons they slowly began to increase industry awareness of the importance of protecting homes with products submitted for full testing and evaluation under the nationally recognized standards. This simple program was designed to encourage the consumer to insist on a product approval/ evaluation number from a legitimate agency before considering any product as protection for their home. However, it was still the responsibility of the consumer to request this information and to interpret technical documentation before making an informed decision against a growing tide of clever marketing schemes developed by the promoters of unapproved products.

The IHPA had been sending documentation of advertising and unsubstantiated claims to the Florida Attorney General’s Office and this culminated in a consumer warning issued by the then Attorney General Bill McCollum. Soon after, various Florida organizations and governmental bodies began supporting the IHPA call for legislation to protect the consumer. During the 2011 legislative session, the concept became reality.

Johnston stated that “We’re not done yet”. We consider this legislation in Florida to be a win for the consumer and legitimate manufacturers and contractors who provide these protection products on a daily basis. Our job will now be to carry this message to other States and regions. We look forward to the day when all hurricane prone regions are promoting products that comply with the testing and approval standards required under the International Building Codes.

New Law states:

"A product may not be advertised, sold, offered, provided, distributed, or marketed as hurricane, windstorm, or impact protection from wind-borne debris from a

hurricane or windstorm unless it is approved pursuant to s. 553.842 or s. 553.8425. Any person who advertises, sells, offers, provides, distributes, or markets a product as hurricane, windstorm, or impact protection from wind-borne debris without such approval is subject to the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act under part II of chapter 501 brought by the enforcing authority as defined in s. 501.203."