

## How Will the Clean Power Plan Affect Your Projects?

*By Tom Herron, LEED Green Associate*

Building professionals know there are few complications more frustrating than finding out that a project's fenestration fails to meet energy codes. As codes become stricter, the cost of compliance related to window, door, skylight and curtain wall failure will go up, threatening to put projects over budget and behind schedule.

A new challenge looming for building professionals is the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) forthcoming Clean Power Plan (CPP). The plan mandates a carbon emissions reduction of 32 percent nationwide by 2030, with individual targets set for each state. State targets are based on "building blocks," including the assumption that demand-side energy efficiency can improve by 1.5 percent *per year* for the next fifteen years. The EPA is encouraging states to tighten building energy codes in order to meet this aggressive goal.

Fortunately, the National Fenestration Rating Council (NFRC) rating and labeling program can help architects and builders avoid potential overruns and comply with code changes resulting from new policies like the CPP. For more than 25 years, NFRC has provided building professionals and consumers with fair, accurate and credible fenestration performance ratings that allow them to compare products and meet all applicable building energy codes.

NFRC's ratings procedures appear in model building energy codes like ASHRAE 90.1 and the International Energy Conservation Code. NFRC ratings also determine eligibility for the ENERGY STAR® program for residential windows. Understanding NFRC's ratings will be key to meeting updated energy codes. NFRC's ratings include:

- **Solar heat gain coefficient**, which measures a product's ability to block heat from the sun;
- **U-factor**, which measures a product's ability to prevent heat loss; and
- **Visible Transmittance**, which measures the amount of light that comes through a product.

As state lawmakers seek to comply with the Clean Power Plan by cutting energy usage across the board, building professionals will need to focus on efficient fenestration more than ever. Taking fenestration into account during the earliest stages of design and construction will help ensure that projects comply with building codes and contribute to the state's energy efficiency goals.

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