



# UL Environment Manufacturer Focus

- Plants:**
- Sunnyvale, California
  - Newark, California
  - Boulder, Colorado
  - Vandergrift, Pennsylvania

- Products:**
- Serious Windows (high-performance insulated windows and glass)
  - QuietRock/QuietHome (soundproof drywall and windows)
  - EcoRock™ (a green alternative to standard drywall)

- Validated Claims:**
- 80% recycled content
  - Low VOC emissions (meets CA 01350)
  - No mercury detected
  - Highly resistant to mold

## Serious Materials | Sunnyvale, CA USA

### Four Questions for Serious Materials

Serious Materials is a building materials manufacturer specializing in producing environmentally sustainable products, including high-performance insulated windows and glass, soundproof drywall and windows, and EcoRock™—a green alternative to standard drywall.

In 2009, following the launch of EcoRock, Serious Materials partnered with UL Environment to validate four environmental claims. UL Environment conducted audits and carried out tests to determine the product's compliance with claims around recycled content, low VOC emissions, absence of mercury and mold resistance.

President and CEO **Ken Surace** and Chief Technology Officer **Brandon Tinianov** sat down with UL Environment to talk about their experience.

#### “Tell us about Serious Materials’ vision as a company.”

**Tinianov** “Buildings are a very important part of the climate change equation. What we want to do is drive technology and transform the ways buildings are built, basically, in their materials and in their operation to speed their efficiency and reduce their impact on the environment.”

**Surace** “The mission of Serious Materials is to reduce worldwide CO<sub>2</sub> by a billion tons a year. Now that’s a very large goal; it’s a long goal. That’s a goal that’s going to take us 12 or 15 years to get to, but we’re going to do it.”

#### “What is the impact of greenwashing in the building industry?”

**Surace** “Greenwashing [the practice of making unsubstantiated or misleading claims about the environmental benefits of a product] affects all of us. Until now, manufacturers have been able to make all kinds of claims with no validation whatsoever. So a manufacturer’s claims might have been true. They might not have been true. But ultimately, none of us . . . competing manufacturers, distributors or consumers . . . really knew for sure.”

**Tinianov** “Greenwashing causes environmental fatigue for consumers. If everything is green and if everything has an environmental benefit, which product do you choose? It desensitizes builders and consumers to what a truly environmentally preferable product looks like and can send them back to their traditional spending habits or construction methods.”



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## “Why did you seek claims validation from UL Environment?”

**Tinianov** “It was important for us to get UL Environment Claims Validation for a couple reasons. First, it validated the guiding principles behind the development and manufacture of EcoRock and its environmental benefits. But the second reason moves beyond just EcoRock as a product. At Serious Materials, we’re a new company with new products and innovative concepts. By partnering with UL, a 115-year-old company with strong international recognition, we’re part of the creation of a new set of validation claims that the consumers can believe in.”

**Surace** “In our industry, UL is considered the gold standard. It’s the one recognized by the contractors . . . it’s the one recognized by the architects. When UL has a stamp on something, while many other labs could have done the work, that’s the one that everyone trusts.”

## “What was it like to work with UL Environment?”

**Tinianov** “UL Environment demonstrated unparalleled technical understanding of our product and our challenges. When we had questions, their experts were able to answer them. They were friendly and courteous, and we really felt that our company was their top priority. They went beyond the normal course of action to help us in a timely, effective manner.”

**Surace** “UL Environment walked us through each step. They turned it around in just a few days of getting the final information from us. Overall, I would say they were very proactive in guiding us through the process in a way that made it simple for us.”

## Summary

On May 5, 2009, following a rigorous, independent testing process, Serious Materials’ EcoRock successfully passed the claims validation testing for the following claims: 80% recycled content, low VOC emissions (meets CA 01350), no mercury detected, and highly resistant to mold.

As a result, Serious Materials may now use the UL Environment service logo on product packaging and marketing materials. Which they are doing to great effect. “EcoRock’s UL Environment Claims Validation is important to us, but it is just as important to our customers,” said Surace. So the company has made claims validation a huge part of its product launch, touting it in press releases, collateral, its Web site and other campaigns.

Four months after the product launch, EcoRock has sold through all existing inventory for the year and continues to receive additional requests for samples and orders. “Getting EcoRock validated by UL Environment has certainly added credibility to our product. It is an excellent tool, and Serious Materials looks forward to continue adding UL Environment validation to our other products,” Surace said.

“When UL has a stamp on something . . . that’s the one that everyone trusts.”

—Ken Surace  
President and CEO  
Serious Materials



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