

Dear Lissy,

I wanted to thank you for giving us this opportunity, and since I was unable to speak on the last two calls, and will be unable to attend the next meeting, I wanted to pass along my feelings on the implementation of this potential new standard.

As a tiny house dweller who built my home, and fought for two years to make it a legal place to live, I see many benefits in creating a standard for the consumer, which has not really been discussed in the previous calls.

The goal of living tiny and living with less is at the heart of creating a standard for me. As a consumer our one goal is mainly the idea that we want to live a simpler life, be free of many possessions and able to have the freedom to move our homes if needed. But, for almost all consumers, myself included when I began my process, in order to do this, we have to become designers, builders, advocates, transportation experts, as well as doing the work of downsizing and trying to then find a place to park. It is quite unheard of, and no wonder there is such a lack of answers, because this not something that is attainable in order to build/buy a tiny home. We are without a place to turn when it comes to the basics of what makes a home safe. We have had to take the word of builders, hope that the people building these homes are doing it correctly, find ways to get insurance, pick our materials without an understanding of how they will work in different areas, and lastly, find a place to park them where we won't be kicked off the land.

I call the world of tiny living the "wild, wild west." I have literally seen my friends tiny burn to the ground due to faulty wiring, and I have another friend who gave every last dime she had to build her tiny house on wheels only to discover that it is not weighted properly and she is unable to tow it without placing over one thousand pounds of weight in the front of her home. She is now stuck and without a warranty, she has no way to travel and no money to fix her home. Countless tiny dwellers I know have been kicked from their homes, cited for living illegally, and forced to pay thousands of dollars in fines, and leave. And the stories go on and on....unfortunately.

From a consumer stand point, we need something in this industry besides a few certification companies that most places don't even understand, and a lot more when it comes to what is really a safe home to be asking a person to dish out thirty to over a hundred thousand or more in cash, because most of these homes are not financed. Don't we at least deserve to know that there are basic requirements in place to protect us if things are not built properly, unable to move properly, and know that we can be safely tied down, and most importantly, have something to work with our local and city officials that will give them a level of understanding about what these are and how they can be handled properly, so that we don't have to lose our one and only home or face fines and have to hide and hope we don't get caught, which leads to more issues!

Consumers deserve to know that the homes they are having built meet a minimum criteria, and that the best and the brightest in the industry have taken the time to put their interests at heart. Without being able to create a standard, I feel that we are doing a disservice to the tiny house community worldwide. After all, without consumers, this does not even matter.

This industry is taking off, with more and more builders, building however they choose, and more and more homes hitting our highways. It is time to seriously think about the impact this has on people's lives.

As a consumer, it is an exhausting experience, we basically have to fight tooth and nail, go off of hearsay, and listen and take advice from people online that have no real experience, and hope that we make the right building choices and lets' be honest here, the market for tiny homes is predominately older single women, who many times are taken advantage of with situations like this. Creating a standard, for a consumer, would give us a chance as an industry to say these are the basic and most acceptable requirements that a builder should meet, so that no consumer has to backtrack and try to make sure a home is built properly without the experience to understand if it is or isn't. We don't accept this type of behavior from foundation home builders. Our trailers should be weighted properly to travel, and standards for how we tie down safely should be addressed.

As a consumer, advocate, and someone who built my own home, I understand the significance of creating this standard and am in full support of this initiative and hope to help us create something that is so needed and will be accepted for future tiny dwellers to build a simple life, and live without fear of unforeseen repercussions due to poor building practices, unsafe traveling procedures, and inadequate tie down practices.

Thank you for allowing me to speak.

With Warm Regards,

Melanie Copeland