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**U.S. Senate Passes Drinking Water Infrastructure Bill
With IAPMO Endorsed WaterSense® Language**

Washington, D.C. (Sept. 15, 2016) — The United States Senate today passed sweeping legislation addressing the nation’s water infrastructure, including authorization for the U.S. EPA’s WaterSense® program, for which IAPMO has been an important advocate.

The Water Resources Development Act of 2016 (S. 2848) is a comprehensive bill addressing diverse concerns, including lead contamination, sewer overflow control, water system security, drinking water conservation, and improving ports and waterways. Among its provisions, the bill will provide about \$270 million in mandatory funding for the EPA and other agencies to respond to drinking water emergencies and lead exposure, support needed flood control projects that protect millions of people and billions of dollars’ worth of infrastructure, and authorize \$50 million annually for grants to support the development of new technology that addresses “pressing water challenges.”

The legislation passed by a vote of 95-3. The text of S. 2848 can be found here:

http://www.epw.senate.gov/public/_cache/files/141a2eca-1a00-4392-a3f3-b69cc0cec872/edw16572.pdf

Of specific interest to IAPMO and the plumbing industry is Sec. 7112 of the bill, which formally establishes WaterSense, the EPA’s voluntary program that identifies and promotes water-efficient products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services that, through voluntary labeling, meet strict performance criteria related to water and energy conservation.

IAPMO and the High-Performance Buildings Coalition (HPBC), which is chaired by IAPMO’s Senior Vice President of Government Relations Dain Hansen, have long championed WaterSense authorization on Capitol Hill, including the successful passing of S. 2012, the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016, in April, which also included a section authorizing WaterSense. That bill is being harmonized with similar legislation passed by the House of Representatives before it seeks President Obama’s signature.

“After years of working with Congress to officially authorize the hugely popular EPA WaterSense program, it seems we are now on the cusp of victory,” Hansen said. “With the House of Representatives already looking to vote on WRDA, and with the broad support for the provisions in the Senate version, this could be the year we see WaterSense solidified in statute.”

IAPMO R&T is a leading provider of WaterSense product certification in the nation and has been a U.S. EPA licensed provider, accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), since 2007, certifying the first high-efficiency toilet (HET) to the standard in April of that year. To date, IAPMO R&T, part of The IAPMO Group, has certified thousands of such water-efficient products to the WaterSense specifications.

Sens. James Inhofe (R-OK) and Barbara Boxer (D-CA) said in a joint statement: “Once again Congress has voted with broad bipartisan support for another major infrastructure bill. Once law, WRDA 2016 will give authority for the Army Corps of Engineers to move forward on 30 projects that will help grow our economy, protect communities from flooding, increase our global competitiveness, and restore our natural treasures. This bill also provides critical support and reforms to help small and disadvantaged communities improve access to clean and safe drinking water and to repair aging infrastructure that contributes to lead contamination nationwide. A critical component of the bill is that we specifically addressed the long-standing lead contamination in Flint. We appreciate our colleagues in the Senate for working collaboratively and around the clock to get this bill passed.”

For more information on the legislation, contact Hansen at (202) 445-7514 or dain.hansen@iapmo.org.