

PMI Urges Immediate Use of EPA WaterSense Products in California

Plumbing Manufacturers International says using WaterSense products can make an immediate, positive impact on water savings while avoiding health and safety risks

Rolling Meadows, Ill. – April 10, 2015 – [Plumbing Manufacturers International \(PMI\)](#) appreciates and applauds Governor Jerry Brown’s April 1 executive order, as the need for water savings in California has never been greater. PMI, however, is concerned that the California Energy Commission’s (CEC) emergency regulations call for products with maximum flow rates far below approved WaterSense levels and, in the case of 1.2 gallons per minute (gpm) residential lavatory faucets, products that do not widely exist. The compliance deadline of January 2016 is unrealistic in view of the time required for product development, testing and certification, and meeting the deadline will be difficult, if not impossible. In addition, consistent with the analysis submitted by acknowledged scientists, PMI has expressed concerns that the 1.2 maximum gpm flow rate for residential lavatory faucets may introduce the risk of waterborne pathogens growing in plumbing systems. Distribution challenges must also be considered.

In working with the CEC on this issue for some time, PMI advocates the use of current WaterSense-labeled, water-efficient plumbing products meeting Environmental Protection Agency criteria. Using these products can save up to 360 million gallons of water per day in California, according to a PMI estimate.

PMI has therefore recommended a 1.5 maximum gpm flow rate for residential lavatory faucets. PMI advocates for flow rates to be established with an eye toward health, safety and product performance. Replacing, or retrofitting, old plumbing fixtures with WaterSense products will deliver immediate savings now. As noted, the executive order sets flow rate levels to be effective in the future, delaying the impact of water savings. “The future is now,” said Barbara C. Higgins, CEO and executive director of PMI. “There is no need to postpone savings. Retrofit to WaterSense today.” Higgins will be a part of a panel presentation on “The Future of Water” at an April 13 [Water Week](#) event in Washington, D.C.

In anticipation of the need for better water efficiency, PMI has been engaged with the CEC during the two-year regulatory process preceding the governor’s order. As a result, PMI is very familiar with the emergency regulations and supports the ones addressing toilets, kitchen faucets and public lavatory faucets.

PMI will continue to work with and provide input to the CEC, the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board as they work to fulfill Governor Jerry Brown’s executive order to develop a statewide rebate program providing monetary incentives for the purchase of these products, which include toilets, faucets and showerheads bearing the WaterSense label of endorsement.

In California, the future is now

In an [April 7 news announcement](#), Higgins stated: “In California, the future is now – a time when steps to sustain an ever-precious resource must be taken. As good stewards of the environment, PMI wants the public to know that using water-efficient plumbing products is an immediate action that can be taken to save water. Flow rates must be set carefully within health and safety parameters to avoid unintended consequences. PMI advocates levels specified by the EPA WaterSense program, which takes performance criteria into account in addition to promoting the efficient use of water. There have been tremendous advancements in the technology and efficacy of plumbing products. Just as you wouldn’t use a 25-year-old cell phone, it doesn’t make sense to use 25-year-old plumbing technology.”

PMI has long encouraged the replacement of older fixtures with WaterSense toilets, showerheads and faucets, which are widely available in stores throughout California and the nation. PMI and its member companies – which produce most of the plumbing products in the United States – participate as partners in the WaterSense program. “Using WaterSense products is common sense,” Higgins said.

WaterSense products use 20 percent less water than federal requirements

To earn the WaterSense label, plumbing products are independently tested and certified as using at least 20 percent less water than federal requirements while meeting performance standards. Available at a wide variety of price points and in a broad range of styles, these water-efficient products are now required by the California Building Code in new construction and renovations. “A statewide rebate program will further water savings by encouraging comprehensive and timely retrofitting of older products in existing buildings,” Higgins said.

PMI has a history of active engagement and support for California legislative and regulatory efforts to accomplish increased water efficiencies:

- PMI was instrumental in the creation and promulgation of the provisions within AB 715 (Laird, Chapter 499, Statutes of 2007) to reduce water consumption of high-efficiency toilets (HET) to 1.28 gallon per flush (gpf) and high efficiency urinals (HEU) to 0.5 gpf. This law set levels of sales for high-efficiency water closets and urinals starting in 2010 and went into full effect for all sales of these products on January 1, 2014. All HETs and HEUs sold in California are required to meet these levels.
- PMI also supported the promulgation of SB 407 (Padilla, Chapter 587, Statutes of 2009), which will require the replacement of plumbing fixtures installed prior to 1994 when new fixtures are installed during new construction or remodeling projects. The older fixtures must be replaced with water-conserving fixtures in single family residences by 2017 and in commercial and multi-family properties by 2019.
- PMI also worked closely with the California Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) and the Building Standards Commission (BSC) to establish water efficiency levels for the 2013 CALGreen section of the California Building Code, which went into effect on January 1, 2014.

About PMI

Plumbing Manufacturers International is the voluntary, not-for-profit international industry association of manufacturers of plumbing products, serving as the Voice of the Plumbing Industry. Member companies produce about 90 percent of the nation's plumbing products. As part of its mission, PMI advocates for plumbing product performance and innovation contributing to water savings, sustainability, public health and safety, and consumer satisfaction. For more information on PMI or its conferences, contact the organization at 1921 Rohlwing Road, Unit G, Rolling Meadows, IL, 60008; tel.: 847-481-5500; fax: 847-481-5501. Visit our website at www.safeplumbing.org.

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