



August 18, 2017

The Honorable John Boozman
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
509 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable James Inhofe
United States Senate
205 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: WaterSense Language in S. 1137 the "Clean Safe Reliable Water Infrastructure Act"

Senators Cardin, Boozman, Duckworth, and Inhofe:

We are writing to thank you for including language to authorize the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program in the "Clean Safe Reliable Water Infrastructure Act" (S. 1137). Additionally, we would like to request that you include additional language in your bill to direct the EPA to consider water quality impacts.

In 2010, the EPA issued a Notice of Intent (NOI) to develop WaterSense specifications for self-regenerating water softeners. These point-of-use products use rock salt, and discharge salty brine into wastewater collection and treatment systems that can make it more difficult to meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit requirements and recycle water. In 2011, the EPA withdrew the NOI after water and wastewater agencies voiced strong concerns about the water quality impacts of these products.

In order to address the issue of water quality and unintended consequences, we would like to request that the following language be added to your bill at the end of subsection (B):

“(b) DUTIES.—The Administrator, coordinating as appropriate with the Secretary of Energy, shall—

“(1) establish—

“(A) a WaterSense label to be used for items meeting the certification criteria established in accordance with this section; and

“(B) the procedure, including the methods and means, and criteria by which an item may be certified to display the WaterSense label, ***minimizing unintended or negative impacts to wastewater treatment works, recycled water quality, or water quality in receiving waters;***

We are supportive of the WaterSense program and believe it can play an important role in encouraging water conservation and alleviating the impacts of drought. However, we also believe it is imperative that the devices that receive the WaterSense label do not directly or indirectly negatively impact water quality. For example, one automatic water softener adds approximately 360 pounds of salt every year to community sewer systems. These additional salt loadings have the potential to directly undermine investments in water recycling and may even cause adverse impacts to surface and groundwater supplies. We believe the language above would help ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency avoids unintended consequences by considering water quality impacts when it implements the WaterSense program.

We greatly appreciate your inclusion of language to authorize the EPA WaterSense program in your legislation, and respectfully request that you include additional language to address the issue of water quality. We thank you for your leadership and your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Kristina Surfus
Legislative Director
National Association of Clean Water Agencies

Abby Schneider
Senior Federal Relations Representative
Association of California Water Agencies

Deidre Finn
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Roberta L. Larson
Executive Director
California Association of Sanitation Agencies

Dr. Eileen O’Neill
Executive Director
Water Environment Federation