



August 18, 2017

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski  
Chairman  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Maria Cantwell  
Ranking Member  
Energy and Natural Resources Committee  
United States Senate  
304 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for WaterSense Language in S. 1460

Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Cantwell:

We are writing to thank you for including language to authorize the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program in the "Energy and Natural Resources Act of 2017" (S. 1460). Specifically, we were pleased to see the WaterSense language included your bill considers the impacts to water quality (Sec 324B (a) (1)(B) and Sect 324B (b)(1)(B)).

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.

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 greatly appreciate your inclusion of language to address water quality issues in the WaterSense authorization language included in S. 1460. 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  
Acting Executive Director  
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Diane VanDe Hei  
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Roberta L. Larson  
Executive Director  
California Association of Sanitation Agencies

Dr. Eileen O'Neill  
Executive Director  
Water Environment Federation