



August 18, 2017

The Honorable Tom Udall
United States Senate
531 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC, 20510

Dear Senator Udall:

We are writing to thank you for including language to authorize the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense program (S. 1700). Specifically, we were pleased to see the WaterSense language included in your bill considers the impacts to water quality (Sec. 324B (a) (1)(B) and Sec. 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 federal 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 found in S. 1700. We thank you for your leadership and your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

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Legislative Director
National Association of Clean Water Agencies

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Senior Federal Relations Representative
Association of California Water Agencies

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