



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, DC 20460

OFFICE OF
WATER

May 22, 2008

Dear Interested Party:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is pleased to announce its latest venture to save water: the promotion of water-efficient new homes. The effort will be part of EPA's WaterSense[®] program, a voluntary program launched in 2006 to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and programs. Since WaterSense began, EPA has developed water efficiency and performance criteria for several product and program categories.

Homes use the majority of the publicly supplied water in the United States. A family of four uses approximately 400 gallons of water every day, and several studies indicate that new single-family homes are using more water than older homes. Water-efficient new homes offer the opportunity to achieve significant water savings.

At this time, EPA is establishing the criteria that single-family new homes must meet to earn the WaterSense label. New home certification and labeling, together with broad education/outreach campaigns and partnerships with key stakeholders, will help transform the marketplace and make it easier for home buyers to find new residences that use less water but still offer superior performance.

The purpose of this letter is to ask for your feedback regarding the draft Water-Efficient Single-Family New Home Specification under the WaterSense program. EPA will accept written comments and hold a public meeting online to discuss stakeholder comments. Following the comment period, EPA will make revisions to the certification criteria, publish the final specification, and allow homebuilders to become WaterSense partners and begin the construction, certification, and labeling process for water-efficient new homes. In addition, we are very interested in your thoughts and ideas about how EPA could include more comprehensive stormwater management criteria into a future revision of the specification. Please provide your written comments on this topic as explained below.

Earning EPA's WaterSense Label for Water-Efficient Single-Family New Homes

The attached draft Water-Efficient Single-Family New Home Specification provides the criteria that a single-family home or townhome will have to meet in order to be certified and labeled under the WaterSense program. The specification is designed to ensure that the home's water using features are efficient and perform as well, or better than, standard features. The specification also provides for education of the homeowner on the importance and operation of the water-efficient aspects of their WaterSense home.



The WaterSense label will apply to newly constructed single-family homes and townhomes three stories or less in height that have been tested and certified to meet the requirements of the specification.

Providing Input on the Draft Specification

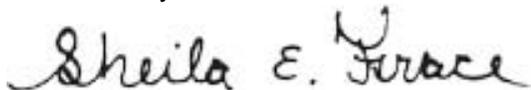
EPA welcomes your input on the draft Water-Efficient Single-Family New Home Specification. All interested parties are encouraged to review the draft specification and provide written comments by July 21, 2008. Written comments on the draft specification and ideas on a possible future revision to include more stormwater management criteria should be directed to watersense-newhomes@erg.com. All comments become a part of the public record.

On June 18, 2008, EPA plans to hold a public meeting online to discuss comments on the draft specification with all stakeholders who would like to provide comments in the forum. To register for the meeting, please go to www.epa.gov/watersense/register.htm and submit the registration information by June 17, 2008. At the time of registration, EPA will provide registration confirmation. Prior to the public meeting, EPA will provide registered participants with an internet URL, call-in number and password, and any other information needed for the meeting.

Following the close of the comment period, EPA will review all comments, and provide a consolidated response. When the specification is finalized, homebuilders, architects, and developers will be welcome to join the WaterSense program as partners and to design and construct homes that can be certified to receive the WaterSense label. Opportunities will also be offered to homebuilding and other trade associations, as well as other organizations, to be WaterSense promotional partners.

If you have any questions about the program, please contact John Flowers at (202) 564-0624 or flowers.john@epa.gov, or the WaterSense Helpline at (866) 987-7367. We look forward to receiving your feedback on the specification, as well as your organization's future participation with WaterSense.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sheila E. Frace".

Sheila Frace
Director,
Municipal Support Division