

WATERSENSE

Reducing Water Use and Saving Money

Why the WaterSense Program Is Important

Since 2006, EPA's WaterSense program has offered Americans a simple way to protect the future of the nation's water supply by reducing their water use with water-efficient products, new homes and services. WaterSense-labeled products are independently certified to use at least 20% less water and perform as well or better than standard models. They have been on the market since 2007, when toilets first earned the WaterSense label, and have grown to include thousands of products used in residential and commercial bathrooms, commercial kitchens and outdoor irrigation. EPA's WaterSense program also certifies homes with WaterSense-labeled fixtures and features. Over the last 10 years, EPA's WaterSense program has reduced water use by an estimated 2.1 trillion gallons and saved Americans over \$46.3 billion.

How the WaterSense Program Works

EPA launched WaterSense in 2006 in response to a request from over 100 manufacturers, retailers, water utilities, states, local governments and non-governmental organizations for the agency to lead a public-private collaboration to design and implement a system to identify water-efficient products. EPA's lead role has been critical to the success of this public information program.

- EPA develops specifications that outline the requirements that products, homes and programs must meet to earn the WaterSense label. The specifications are developed through a process open to public scrutiny, which identifies the product, the water use criteria and the performance requirements. Product specifications are updated periodically based on the availability of more efficient products.
- Manufacturers, on a voluntary basis, submit their products to third-party certifying organizations for approval as WaterSense-compliant products eligible to use the WaterSense mark in promotional materials.
- Authorized retail partners use the WaterSense logo in stores or in advertising to promote products. Product specifications are updated periodically based on the availability of more efficient products.

Consequences if the Program Is Eliminated or Inadequately Funded

- Consumer savings would be lost: Consumers would lose their source of trusted information regarding the selection of water-efficient products and practices, and the savings from water conservation.
- Conservation support to businesses would suffer: There are more than 2,600 landscape professionals who have been certified through the WaterSense program, and over 1,850 manufacturing, retailer, water utility, state, local government and non-government partners are supported through the program.
- Water use would increase: An estimated 2.1 trillion gallons of water has been saved since 2006 through WaterSense, more than the total amount used by all U.S. households in 75 days. Water savings have also reduced the energy needed to heat, pump and treat water by 284 billion kilowatt hours, enough to power 26.3 million homes.
- Proven partnerships would be at risk: Many companies have built their product lines around WaterSense-certified products. In 2016 alone, companies used the WaterSense mark over three billion times to promote their water-efficient products.

- “[The label] provides an easy to understand and uniform visual cue to consumers who are looking for water-efficient products.” – Kohler Co.
- “We see such value in the WaterSense mark that we have moved to 100% WaterSense-labeled toilets, lavatory faucets, and shower heads in our 1,978 U.S. stores.” – The Home Depot
- **Infrastructure would be strained:** The enormous reductions in water use resulting from the WaterSense program have been a benefit to drinking water and wastewater utilities. Less water flowing to treatment facilities on a daily basis saves resources at the plants and extends the life of existing infrastructure.

Demonstrated Successes

- **Expanded markets:** There are seven WaterSense product lines and over 21,000 product models currently on the market. In 2016, over 5,000 new product models earned the WaterSense label, and manufacturers shipped over 68 million WaterSense-labeled products.
- **Supported industries:** The irrigation industry relies on design, installation and maintenance professionals to deliver water to home and commercial landscapes. WaterSense, in cooperation with the irrigation industry, has developed water-efficient techniques and technologies. Over 2,600 landscape design, audit, installation and maintenance professionals have been WaterSense-certified, and homeowners and businesses can use the Directory of Certified Professionals to find a professional for assistance.
- **Increased real estate values:** WaterSense-certified homes are designed for water efficiency and performance. National homebuilder KB Homes completed 265 WaterSense homes in 2016 alone, including an entire community in West Covina, CA.

Funding for WaterSense

FY2016 Baseline Budget: \$3.075 million

FY2018 President’s Budget Proposal: \$3.079 million

FY2018 Amount Appropriated: \$0

FY2019 President’s Budget Proposal: \$3.100 million

FY2019 Amount Appropriated: \$0

FY2020 President’s Budget Proposal: \$0