



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

APR - 7 2006

OFFICE OF
WATER

Dear Interested Party:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will soon be launching a new, voluntary Water Efficiency Program that seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products and services. The EPA Water Efficiency Program is designed to change the way the American public and businesses think about water and make decisions regarding water use and water-using products and services. The attached program overview provides general information on EPA's new Water Efficiency Program.

Outdoor water use in this country accounts for an average of one-third of all residential water use, and the majority of this water is used for irrigating landscaped areas. In order to improve the efficiency of landscape irrigation water use, EPA will address both efficient irrigation system components and services. Certification programs for irrigation professionals are the first service area that will be eligible for recognition by EPA's Water Efficiency Program. The program will help consumers identify professional service providers that embrace and encourage the use of water efficient practices to enhance performance, save water, and save money.

At this time, EPA is establishing criteria to recognize certification programs for irrigation professionals in three areas: system design; installation and maintenance; and system auditing. Any certification program that meets the criteria for one of these areas will be eligible for recognition. EPA recognition will increase visibility for certification programs that promote water efficiency, increase participation in qualified certification programs, increase market share for certified irrigation professionals, and promote more efficient irrigation system design, installation, and maintenance.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with a copy of EPA's draft criteria for recognition of certification programs for irrigation professionals and to ask for your feedback on these criteria. EPA will accept written comments and hold a public meeting to discuss stakeholder comments. Following the comment period, EPA will make any necessary revisions to the criteria, publish the final criteria, and begin accepting applications for recognition of programs.

While EPA will not recognize individual irrigation professionals, we will work to educate the public about the value of choosing a professional with a certification meeting EPA's Water Efficiency Program criteria. In addition, EPA will seek the support of water efficiency advocates and water agencies in encouraging consumers to look for irrigation professionals who have obtained certification under recognized programs.

Efficient design, installation, and maintenance need to be applied using efficient irrigation components to achieve optimum irrigation system performance. The draft criteria distributed today address the professional service side of ensuring efficient system performance. EPA is also planning to develop product specifications for water efficient irrigation system components in the future and looks forward to coordinating with you on those specifications, as they evolve.

Earning EPA's Water Efficiency Program Recognition for Certification Programs for Irrigation Professionals

The EPA Water Efficiency Program will recognize certification programs for irrigation professionals that meet the criteria listed in the attached documents. The criteria address certification programs in three categories:

- Irrigation Auditor: Applies to programs that certify irrigation professionals who assess the proper functioning of existing irrigation systems, perform water audits, and recommend watering schedules,
- Irrigation Installation and Maintenance Professional: Applies to programs that certify irrigation professionals who install new irrigation systems and/or repair and maintain existing irrigation systems, and
- Irrigation Designer: Applies to programs that certify irrigation professionals who develop the design of new irrigation systems and/or modifications to existing irrigation systems.

Providing Input on the Draft Specifications

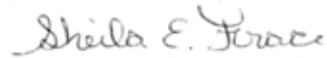
EPA welcomes your input on the draft criteria. All interested parties are encouraged to review the draft criteria and provide written comments by May 26, 2006. Written comments should be directed to irrigation@epa.gov. All comments become a part of the public record.

On May 3, 2006, EPA plans to hold a meeting on the draft criteria for recognition of certification programs for irrigation professionals with all stakeholders that would like to provide comments in that forum. The meeting will take place from 1:00 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. MDT at EPA's Region 8 Headquarters in Denver, CO. To register for the meeting, please go to www.epa.gov/water-efficiency/products_program.htm, and submit the registration information by Wednesday, April 26 2006. EPA will provide registration confirmation, as well as any other information needed for the meeting. If you are unable to attend in person and would like to participate, a conference call number will also be available.

Following the comment period, EPA will review all comments, and provide a consolidated response. The final recognition criteria will then be finalized, and EPA will begin accepting applications for recognition of qualified certification programs.

If you have questions about the program, please contact Jane Anderson at (202) 564-0643 or anderson.jane@epa.gov. We look forward to receiving your feedback on the specifications, as well as your organization's participation with EPA's new Water Efficiency Program.

Sincerely,

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

Sheila E. Frace

Director
Municipal Support Division