



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

March 22, 2012

OFFICE OF
WATER

Dear Interested Party:

Since the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA's) release of the final [WaterSense® Single-Family New Home Specification](#) in December 2009, the WaterSense program has continued to grow its suite of labeled products, gathered additional information about typical building practices, and received feedback from stakeholders.

As highlighted in the Notification of Intent (NOI) issued in October 2011, WaterSense believes that a number of areas of the specification could benefit from reevaluation and updating. These areas (as highlighted in the NOI) include:

1. Expanding the scope to accommodate some homes in multi-family buildings
2. Updating product requirements to include the most recent products labeled by the WaterSense program
3. Adjusting the landscape design criteria

To facilitate these updates, WaterSense is releasing the *Draft New Home Specification Version 1.1*. EPA's goal of releasing this draft update is not only to refine and clarify individual sections of the specification, but to also facilitate program growth into new areas of the home building market. This update will allow a larger number of builders and stakeholders to participate in the WaterSense program and lead to greater national water savings.

EPA is interested in receiving feedback on the modifications proposed in draft version 1.1 of the WaterSense New Home Specification. Other aspects of the specification beyond those highlighted here are not being considered for revision at this time. Interested parties are welcome to submit comments by 05/07/2012 by utilizing the [comment template](#).

Sincerely,

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

Sheila Frace

Director, Municipal Support Division

Summary of Changes in the [Draft Version 1.1 WaterSense New Home Specification](#)

Scope

In order to accommodate the growth of the program, as well the builders who have sought the label for homes in multi-family buildings, the draft specification proposes expanding the specification's scope to units in multi-family buildings that meet certain requirements. EPA's objective is to determine which dwellings have major uses of water that are similar enough to single-family homes that the bulk of the criteria can be safely applied.

The revised scope would allow homes to pursue the WaterSense label if they are single-family homes and townhomes; residential units in multi-family buildings, three stories or less in size; or residential units in multi-family buildings, including mixed-use buildings, that have independent heating, cooling, and hot water systems separate from other units.

To accommodate scenarios unique to multi-family buildings, WaterSense has clarified and adjusted criteria throughout draft version 1.1 of the specification to ensure that major water uses are addressed in an appropriate way. These adjustments are summarized in appendix D and include:

- Criteria for common-use laundry facilities
- Requiring meters (or an equivalent technology) for individual units, pools, and irrigation systems
- Clarifications of how the improved-upon area (i.e., landscaped area) should be defined
- New criteria for common use pools/spas
- Adjustments to the homeowner education requirements

Product Requirements

Since finalizing the specification in 2009, the WaterSense program has added product categories for showerheads and weather-based irrigation controllers. As WaterSense labeled products are a simple and cost-effective way to ensure that homes save water and perform well, draft version 1.1 of the specification requires WaterSense labeled showerheads and weather-based irrigation controllers. Because the specification for weather-based irrigation controllers was released in November 2011 and no models have completed the required certification process as of March 22, 2012, WaterSense intends to work with manufacturers and industry stakeholders to establish an appropriate future date when the requirement for WaterSense labeled weather-based irrigation controllers should be enforced.

Landscape Design Requirements

Of the two options for complying with the landscape design requirements, the Water Budget Tool (option 1) is recognized as the preferred option, as it takes into account local weather patterns/climate and encourages builders to plant locally appropriate, water-efficient landscapes. WaterSense has observed minimal use of option 2, which limits use of turfgrass to 40 percent or less of the landscaped area. WaterSense has also conducted training and education on the use of the Water Budget Tool while greatly improving the user interface. As a result, draft version 1.1 of the specification requires use of the Water Budget Tool in order to comply with the landscape design criteria. While this change is being made for its national specification, WaterSense believes that local jurisdictions should be allowed to develop landscape requirements that address their specific climate and water supply issues.