



**WaterSense® Program Guidelines
Version 5.5**

May 2020

WaterSense® Program Guidelines

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1. Introduction

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) developed the *WaterSense Program Guidelines* to provide guidance on eligibility criteria, conditions for participation, and general information about WaterSense. These guidelines are also intended to be a road map for navigating various aspects of WaterSense, including partnership with EPA, the specification development process, use of the WaterSense label and other program marks, and program measurement. The *WaterSense Program Guidelines* serve as one of the controlling documents for WaterSense, along with the following:

- [WaterSense Product Certification System¹](#)
- [WaterSense Home Certification System](#)
- [WaterSense Professional Certification Program Labeling System](#)
- [WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines](#)

These documents answer many questions participants might have about the program. For definitions of terms used throughout the *WaterSense Program Guidelines*, see [Section 7](#). Participants with more in-depth questions about the *WaterSense Program Guidelines* should contact the WaterSense Helpline at watersense@epa.gov or (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367).

1.1. Changes From the Previous Version

In Version 5.5 of the *WaterSense Program Guidelines*, the following content has been added or changed to reflect program updates:

WaterSense reorganized the structure and roles involved in the administration of the Homes program and the certification and labeling of homes WaterSense will only alter this document when significant changes have been made to the program. Minor changes to wording or items not affecting the implementation of the program might be held until they can be consolidated into a substantive revision.

2. General Program Information

2.1. Program Overview

WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA that is designed to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, homes, and professional certification programs (hereafter referred to as "programs"). WaterSense aims to help consumers and businesses use water resources more efficiently to preserve them for future generations and to reduce water and wastewater infrastructure costs by decreasing unnecessary water consumption. Through this program, EPA provides reliable information on water-efficient, high-performing products, homes, and practices; raises awareness about the importance of water efficiency; ensures water-efficient product performance; helps consumers and businesses identify products and services that use less water; promotes innovation in product development; and supports state and local water efficiency efforts.²

¹ Any reference to controlling program documents refers to the most current version posted on the WaterSense website.

² Note: WaterSense is not a technology development program; rather, it focuses on ready-for-market products.

2.2. Authority

- Section 4306 of the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-270) establishes the WaterSense Program as a voluntary program within EPA to identify and promote water-efficient products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services in order to sensibly: reduce water use; reduce the strain on public water systems, community water systems, and wastewater and stormwater infrastructure; conserve energy used to pump, heat, transport, and treat water; and preserve water resources for future generations. A full copy of the provision is available in Appendix A.
- Sections 104(a) and (b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA) broadly authorize the EPA Administrator to "establish national programs" for the reduction of pollution, which might include cooperation with, encouragement of, and assistance for public and private efforts to prevent, reduce, and eliminate pollution.
- Section 104(o) of the CWA also authorizes the EPA Administrator to conduct research on methods of reducing the total flow of sewage, including unnecessary water consumption, which is a recognition by Congress as directly related to sewage flow and thus, to potential water pollution.
- Sections 1442(a)(1) and (2) of the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) authorize the EPA Administrator to provide demonstrations relating to the provision of a dependably safe supply of drinking water. Because both a dependable and a safe supply of drinking water depend upon water availability, water conservation demonstrations could be authorized under these sections.

2.3. Roles and Functions

To achieve the mission of the WaterSense program, EPA establishes partnerships with interested stakeholders, such as product manufacturers, retailers, builders, water utilities, and other organizations. EPA provides and maintains the WaterSense brand and develops national specifications for water-efficient products, homes, and programs. Partners develop products and programs meeting the specifications and promote and distribute them to customers. Partners also assist EPA in promoting water efficiency in general as well as the WaterSense brand specifically. Following are the roles anticipated for each participant category. For more information about partnership eligibility, see [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

- **EPA:** Sponsors WaterSense; promotes the WaterSense brand and water efficiency; recruits partners; updates stakeholders on the program; develops product, home, and program specifications; approves organizations that administer WaterSense certifications as described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*, *WaterSense Home Certification System*, or *WaterSense Professional Certification Program Labeling System*; licenses certifying bodies and home certification organizations; evaluates applications submitted by professional certifying organizations and home certification organizations; signs WaterSense partnership agreements; maintains the web registry of labeled products and certification programs; monitors use of the WaterSense program logos and labels; and recognizes participants.
- **Manufacturers** (e.g., companies that manufacture, produce, assemble, or import products that meet WaterSense specifications): Promote technology; improve product performance; make or brand products certified to meet WaterSense criteria; maintain

product certification; advertise/promote WaterSense labeled products; and provide product shipment data on an annual basis. Manufacturers agree to abide by the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*. Specifically, all manufacturer partners must include the WaterSense label on product packaging and online and printed specification sheets for all products certified to meet a WaterSense specification unless the packaging is too small. Manufacturer partners must also display the WaterSense label in association with any labeled product listed on the organization's website or other promotional materials.

- **Professional certifying organizations:** Administer professional certification programs that meet WaterSense criteria; provide water efficiency education; promote certified professionals; maintain and provide to EPA up-to-date contact and business information on professionals certified by the professional certifying organization's labeled program(s); report program activity and statistics to EPA on an annual basis; help promote WaterSense and water efficiency; and provide other support as specified in the *WaterSense Professional Certification Program Labeling System*.
- **Retailers/distributors:** Provide shelf space and in-store promotion and identification of WaterSense labeled products; train sales staff; conduct consumer workshops; encourage cross-promotion and advertising/discounts; and provide product sales data on an annual basis. Retailers/distributors wishing to sell WaterSense labeled products under their own brand (e.g., private labeled products) agree to work with the manufacturer(s) of any labeled products to ensure that both the retailer/distributor's and the manufacturer's information are included in the WaterSense certification file and that the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* are followed.
- **Utilities, water boards, and local governments:** Support water efficiency programs; promote the WaterSense brand through education and awareness; sponsor rebates and financial incentives; conduct public outreach and business education; and provide water supply and conservation program data on an annual basis.
- **Associations, nonprofit organizations, and state and federal government agencies:** Conduct water efficiency education and awareness campaigns; raise awareness of the WaterSense program; assist EPA with recruitment; distribute and publish water efficiency materials; provide data on an annual basis; and conduct constituent surveys.
- **Builders:** Build, renovate, or otherwise produce homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*; promote WaterSense labeled products and WaterSense labeled homes to consumers; report data on the number of homes built on an annual basis; and provide other support as specified in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*.
- **Other organizations** (e.g., organizations with which EPA does not have partnership agreements, but with which it may sign other types of agreements or have other relationships to help implement the program):
 - **Accreditation bodies:** Convey formal demonstration that licensed certifying bodies are competent to carry out product certification activities in accordance with WaterSense product specifications and the *WaterSense Product Certification System*.
 - **Home certification organizations:** Train and authorize verifiers; oversee the verification, certification, and labeling of homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Homes Certification System* and the *WaterSense Specification for*

Homes; maintain and report to EPA information about authorized verifiers and certified homes; and authorize the use and distribution of the WaterSense label for homes. The home certification organization must signify their commitment by signing a licensing agreement with WaterSense.

- **Licensed certifying bodies:** Conduct product testing and certification to demonstrate that a product meets and continues to meet WaterSense requirements for water efficiency and performance in accordance with the *WaterSense Product Certification System* and the relevant WaterSense product specification. Licensed certifying bodies also authorize manufacturers of certified products to use the WaterSense label; provide a list of certified products to EPA; and police the label in the marketplace.
- **WaterSense home verifiers:** Verify homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

2.4. Third-Party Certification

Products and homes bearing the WaterSense label are certified to meet the relevant WaterSense specification by third parties that are approved under the *WaterSense Product Certification System* or the *WaterSense Home Certification System*. Under no circumstances can a first or second party (see definitions below) serve as the third party in relation to a specific product or home (e.g., a manufacturer or builder is not eligible to certify its own product or home under any circumstances).

- **First party:** The party responsible for the creation of a product or home. Manufacturers, manufacturer private labelers, and builders are considered first parties for purposes of the WaterSense program.
- **Second party:** The person or organization that has a user interest in the object (e.g., procurer, purchaser, or user). Consumers, retailers, retailer/distributor private labelers, and other entities involved but not directly affiliated with first-party producers are considered second parties for purposes of the WaterSense program.
- **Third party:** An entity independent of the first or second party. Licensed certifying bodies and home certification organizations are both third-party entities that perform assessments, tests, verifications, and other services to determine if a given product or home meets the criteria necessary to earn the WaterSense label.

3. WaterSense Specifications

WaterSense evaluates, selects, and develops voluntary specifications for water-efficient products, homes, and programs based on a variety of factors and in accordance with specific guidelines outlined in this section. EPA can revise a specification or issue technical clarifications at any time after a specification is final.

3.1. Evaluation Factors

WaterSense has adopted overarching evaluation factors that guide EPA in selecting products, homes, and programs for specification development and labeling.

3.1.1. Evaluation Factors for Products and Homes

In general, when developing specifications, WaterSense evaluates products and homes for:

- **Water savings:** Provides significant water savings on a national basis.
- **Performance:** Performs as well as or better than standard models or homes, assuming proper installation, operation, maintenance, and/or construction. Products and homes will be easy to find and require no consumer sacrifice in terms of convenience, comfort, hygiene, health, safety, or availability.
- **Variety of technological options:** Achieves water efficiency through several technology options. WaterSense will not label a category or specify a technology that has only one proprietary product or design.
- **Efficiency differentiation:** Be effectively differentiated from standard models or homes by a label that purchasers can recognize. Typically, the specification is set to label products or homes that are at least 20 percent more water-efficient than conventional or standard products or homes in that category.
- **Independent third-party certification:** Products and homes must be certified by an EPA-licensed certifying body or EPA-licensed home certification organization, respectively, to confirm that the product or home meets EPA's criteria for efficiency and performance.
- **Measurable results:** Provides measurable results, quantifiable in terms of water saved/water use avoided compared to standard models as well as level of desired performance achieved.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Provides a cost-effective alternative to consumers to the extent possible.
- **Stakeholder support:** Supported by a broad set of stakeholders, meaning there is a general consensus that the efficient products or homes will be promoted by a cross-section of stakeholders (e.g., manufacturers, retailers, distributors, utilities, builders, irrigation professionals, etc.).

As the evaluation factors listed above demonstrate, WaterSense will direct its limited resources to areas where the program can have a significant impact on improving the efficiency of products that use or directly control the use of water. As it evaluates performance of products, WaterSense also takes into consideration potential impacts beyond water efficiency, including environmental and economic impacts. This includes requesting and reviewing data to determine if there are any unintended or negative impacts that could be caused by anticipated specification requirements.

There are often alternative technologies that serve a similar purpose as labeled products but use no water as part of the process. Because WaterSense has no basis to propose improvements to the existing water use, the program has chosen not to use its limited funding to develop specifications for these products. In addition, WaterSense evaluates whether a product can deliver both water efficiency and expected performance. Certain retrofit or component products that are designed to modify or control the water use of a base product but that cannot ensure an expected level of performance of the base product are generally not candidates for specification development. All labeled products must be able to deliver all the efficiency and performance criteria established in the WaterSense specification.

Manufacturers of these products (e.g., non-water-using, retrofit devices) should note that it is not the intent of the WaterSense program to place these products at any disadvantage in the marketplace nor to affect their eligibility for water conservation incentives, purchasing guidelines, or specifications. EPA recognizes that many of these products might meet applicable national standards and can be appropriate water efficiency options. Decision makers should consider them

as equally eligible for the same rebates, tax incentives, procurement guidelines, and other conservation incentives as WaterSense labeled products. Where a product category is covered by a WaterSense specification, EPA requires the use of the WaterSense label on product packaging to identify certified products.

3.1.2. Evaluation Factors for Professional Certification Programs

In general, when developing specifications, WaterSense evaluates programs for:

- **Water savings:** Promotes efficient practices resulting in water savings (e.g., professionals in the given industry must employ practices that address the efficient use of water).
- **Performance:** Promotes efficient industry practices resulting in a system that does not sacrifice performance (e.g., an irrigation system must perform well). Services provided by certified professionals will be easy to find, and practices will require no sacrifice in terms of convenience, hygiene, health, safety, or availability.
- **Availability of relevant certification programs:** The industry category must offer at least one certification program to industry professionals that results in demonstrated knowledge of water efficiency related to the professionals' practice.
- **Stakeholder support:** Supported by a broad set of stakeholders, meaning there is a general consensus that the programs and professionals in this category will be promoted by a cross-section of stakeholders (e.g., retailers, distributors, builders, architects, utilities).

3.2. Specification Development Process

EPA develops specifications that describe the attributes required for products, homes, or programs to earn the WaterSense label. Specifications for products or homes generally describe both water use and performance attributes. Specifications for programs describe the attributes that must be followed to demonstrate compliance with the requirements described in the specification. All specifications are developed with stakeholder input. The process is described in detail below.

After conducting initial technical and market research, EPA applies the evaluation factors above to determine if a specification should be developed. If enough support exists to consider a specification, EPA typically issues a notice of intent (NOI) announcing its plans to develop a specification for a given product, home, or program. The NOI outlines the efficiency and performance criteria WaterSense is working to define and the technical issues that still need to be resolved related to the given product, home, or program. There is no commitment on the part of the Agency to develop a specification within a certain time period after release of the NOI, if at all.

If the Agency receives information to answer remaining technical issues, EPA then prepares a draft specification based on market research and discussions with industry and interested stakeholders. Where possible, WaterSense might work with voluntary consensus standards bodies (e.g., American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers [ASABE], American Society of Mechanical Engineers [ASME], American Society for Testing and Materials [ASTM International], Canadian Standards Association [CSA]) or other industry groups to help develop the efficiency and

performance criteria.³ Once a draft specification is complete, EPA releases it publicly via the WaterSense website, holds conference calls and/or public meetings, and requests written public comments. EPA considers all comments, refines the specification as appropriate, and then re-releases the specification in either a revised draft or final form. The number of rounds of public review before the specification is finalized depends upon the nature and extent of comments on the prior draft. EPA considers all comments on key technical issues and requirements in the development of the final specification, as it strives to maintain a balance between environmental benefits and market factors. EPA has the ultimate authority in setting specification requirements after carefully considering all stakeholder input.

3.3. Revisions to Specifications

EPA reserves the right to issue technical clarification(s) or revise WaterSense specifications should technological and/or market changes affect the relevance and/or effectiveness of current specifications to consumers, industry, or the environment. Revisions or clarifications made to specifications would include discussions with industry and other interested parties and would adhere to the following guiding principles.

3.3.1. Technical Clarifications

In some cases, a technical clarification might be issued instead of a specification revision. From time to time, EPA receives questions regarding the applicability of existing specifications or the intended meaning of specification requirements. In an effort to answer such questions and clarify the intent of the specifications, EPA publishes technical clarification on the WaterSense website twice per year, usually December and June. EPA notifies stakeholders and licensed certifying bodies by email when clarification documents are posted to the WaterSense website.

3.3.2. Editorial Revisions

EPA might sometimes find it necessary to issue an editorial update to an existing specification. These updates will generally include changes to citations in the specification, previously released technical clarifications, and/or other changes to content not directly related to the efficiency or performance criteria. When it becomes necessary to make an editorial change, WaterSense will work with affected stakeholders but, at its discretion, might not request public comment on the changes.

3.3.3. Technical Revisions

At its discretion, EPA might choose to revise a specification. Any final decision to revise a specification is also contingent upon the resources available to the WaterSense program to undertake the technical work needed to complete a revision. Of note, AWIA requires that, not more frequently than every six years after adoption or major revision of any WaterSense performance criteria, EPA review and, if appropriate, revise the performance criteria to achieve additional water savings. Conditions that might trigger a technical revision to a specification are described below.

³ The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) and OMB Circular A-119 direct the federal government to use, participate in the development of, and reference standards developed in voluntary consensus processes, where those standards meet government needs.

3.3.3.1. Product Specifications

- WaterSense labeled products in a specific category comprise a significant portion of the market share based on the number of units shipped as reported by WaterSense partners. In this instance, market share means the ratio of WaterSense labeled units to non-WaterSense labeled units sold in the same product category.
- EPA identifies significant and broadly available improvements in technology or product design in any labeled product category that improves the product's water efficiency. In this context, significantly improved products would be products that are approximately 10 percent more efficient or higher performing than current WaterSense labeled products, are offered by multiple manufacturers, and/or capture approximately 10 percent or more of the total market share for that product category.
- EPA becomes aware of performance issues associated with products that are currently labeled under the specification.
- A water efficiency standard is adopted nationally that would mandate product efficiency equivalent to that in the specification, such that the WaterSense label would no longer be able to differentiate products that were more efficient than those meeting the national standard.

3.3.3.2. Home Specification

- EPA becomes aware of performance issues associated with products, systems, technologies, or designs that could impact consumer satisfaction with a WaterSense labeled home.
- Likewise, if a WaterSense specification is finalized for a residential product or certification program, and adequate time has elapsed to ensure availability of that product or certified service professionals to builders in the marketplace.
- Market factors that dictate the need for revisiting the current WaterSense Homes Program organization.

3.3.3.3. Program Specifications

- EPA identifies significant and broadly available improvements in technology or professional practice in any labeled professional certification program category that positively impact its ability to deliver water efficiency.
- The requirement of certified professionals is adopted as a national standard, such that the WaterSense labeled programs would no longer be able to differentiate professional proficiency.

Revisions will only be made to specifications after open dialogue with interested stakeholders and provided that the more water-efficient products, homes, or programs continue to meet the WaterSense product evaluation factors contained in this section. Any proposed technical revisions to a specification will undergo public review and comment. For existing labeled products and programs, EPA will provide a grace period for compliance with the revised specification, during which time they can continue to bear the WaterSense label. The timeline for compliance for any revision will be specified in the revised specification or supporting documentation, after careful consideration of the concerns of all interested parties. The length of the grace period is dependent upon the impact of the specification change to the associated sector (e.g., manufacturer or

professional certification program) and will take into account the timing necessary for the manufacture, marketing, training, and distribution of the product for which a specification change is being made. Following the expiration date of the grace period, products or programs will be required to meet the revised specification criteria in order to bear the WaterSense label.

For those products or programs that do not meet the revised specification, the same requirements and timeframes for removal of the WaterSense label shall apply as when the WaterSense label is withdrawn, as described in [Section 4.3. Monitoring and Enforcement of Proper Label Use](#).

4. WaterSense Program Marks: Process, Use, and Monitoring and Enforcement

The WaterSense program has several different program marks used for different purposes. The WaterSense label was created as the cornerstone to differentiate products, homes, and programs in the marketplace that meet EPA's criteria for efficiency and performance. The WaterSense label itself looks significantly different than other WaterSense program marks, such as the WaterSense program logo, partner logo, and promotional labels, and it varies among products, homes, and programs. See the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* for illustrations and usage instructions for the various WaterSense program marks.

4.1. Process for Obtaining the WaterSense Label

The following sections describe the specific requirements for obtaining the WaterSense label for products, homes, and programs:

4.1.1. Products

To ensure the integrity of the WaterSense label for products in the marketplace, EPA has established specific requirements to control how it is accessed and used. Use of the WaterSense label on products is limited to manufacturers, retailers, and distributors under the following conditions:

- Manufacturers and retailers and/or distributors that privately label or rebrand WaterSense labeled products must have a signed a partnership agreement with EPA that includes an agreement to abide by the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.
- Any product that receives the label must have been certified to conform to the relevant WaterSense specification by a licensed certifying body in accordance with the *WaterSense Product Certification System*.

The licensed certifying body provides the WaterSense label and authorization for its use to manufacturers, retailers, and distributors that have met the above criteria. Procedures for product certification and labeling, including the certification of private labeled or rebranded products, are described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*.

4.1.2. Homes

To ensure the integrity of the WaterSense label applied to homes, use of the label is limited to builders under the following conditions:

- Builders must have a signed partnership agreement with EPA that includes an agreement to abide by the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

- The homes must be located in the United States, its territories, or Canada.
- The homes must be certified to by an EPA-licensed home certification organization to conform to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes* in accordance with the *WaterSense Home Certification System*.

WaterSense approves and licenses home certification organizations to certify homes to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. The home certification organization issues the WaterSense label in the form of a certificate and optional sticker to builders who have met the above criteria and constructed homes that meet the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. Procedures for home verification, certification, and labeling are described in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*.

4.1.3. Programs

To ensure the integrity of the WaterSense label with regard to programs, EPA has established specific requirements to control how the label is accessed and used. For more details, see the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

Use of the WaterSense label in relation to programs is limited to professional certifying organizations under the following conditions:

- Professional certifying organizations must be generally approved by EPA according to the *WaterSense Professional Certification Program Labeling System*.
- Professional certifying organizations must have a program that conforms to the relevant WaterSense specification.
- Professional certifying organizations must have a signed partnership agreement with EPA.

Organizations wishing to earn the WaterSense label for a certification program must be an EPA-approved professional certifying organization as described in the *WaterSense Professional Certification Program Labeling System*. Organizations must then submit an application to EPA requesting the label for its professional certification program and include all documentation required by the specification applicable to its program. EPA accepts forms and documentation that are submitted via email and mail. EPA (or its agent) will acknowledge receipt of the application packet and notify applicants of the Agency's acceptance or rejection of the program for WaterSense labeling. If the program is accepted, the professional certifying organization shall complete and sign a WaterSense partnership agreement with EPA. EPA will then provide the professional certifying organization with the label and associated materials.

If a professional certifying organization's application to label a certification program is rejected, EPA will explain the deficiencies in the application so the deficiencies can be resolved. EPA updates the WaterSense web registry on a monthly basis to add newly labeled programs. EPA does not publish information about non-qualifying certification programs. Partners are responsible for informing EPA when their programs are no longer available or compliant with WaterSense specifications and should be removed from the web registry.

4.2. Using the WaterSense Label

EPA has established specific guidelines for using the WaterSense label to identify water-efficient, high-performing products, homes, and programs. For more details, see the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

4.2.1. Products

When using the WaterSense label to identify products that have been independently certified to meet EPA's criteria for efficiency and performance, the manufacturer, retailer, and distributor partners must adhere to the following requirements:

- In all instances, the manufacturer of a WaterSense labeled product is responsible for ensuring that the label is used in accordance with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.
- Any manufacturer partner wishing to use the label must have received the appropriate notification of third-party certification for the relevant product(s).
- Specifically, for all products certified to meet a WaterSense specification, manufacturers **must** include the WaterSense label on product packaging and in online and printed specification sheets. Manufacturers should display the WaterSense label in association with any labeled product on the organization's website or other promotional materials. The label can be used in promotional literature published about the product by the manufacturer or private labeler, as long as it is in direct association with a certified product.
- Distributors and retailers who are distributing or selling WaterSense labeled products for which they are not a private labeler are only allowed to use the label when it is supplied directly by a WaterSense manufacturer partner. Alternatively, distributors and retailers are allowed to use the WaterSense promotional label to designate WaterSense labeled products in retail or distributor point-of-purchase, advertising, or internet sites. All parties should review the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* prior to using the WaterSense label.

To ensure the integrity of the WaterSense brand and as a service to assist manufacturers, distributors, and retailers with proper use of the WaterSense label, EPA encourages each participating manufacturer, distributor, or retailer to provide WaterSense electronic pre-publication samples of any promotional materials used to promote its WaterSense labeled product(s). EPA will provide review within five business days of any materials provided to the Agency prior to publishing. EPA also provides a promotional label to all of its partners to promote WaterSense labeled products when a specific product label is not available or appropriate. When using the WaterSense promotional label, partners should adhere to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

4.2.2. Homes

The WaterSense label is provided to builders in the form of a certificate and optional sticker to identify homes that have been independently inspected and certified to meet EPA's specification criteria for homes. The WaterSense label in the form of a certificate or sticker must be used in accordance with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

In addition to the WaterSense label certificate and optional sticker, EPA allows builders to use the WaterSense promotional labels to identify themselves as builders of WaterSense labeled homes. The house-shaped WaterSense “we build” promotional label should only be used by WaterSense builder partners who are building in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. When using a WaterSense promotional label, builder partners must adhere to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

In addition to the builder promotional label, EPA allows home verifiers approved by a home certification organization to identify themselves as verifiers of WaterSense labeled homes. The house-shaped WaterSense “we verify” promotional label should only be used by verifiers who are verifying in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. When using a WaterSense promotional label, verifiers must adhere to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*. To ensure the integrity of the WaterSense brand, and as a service to assist builder partners with proper use of the builder promotional label, EPA encourages participating builder partners to provide WaterSense electronic pre-publication samples of any promotional materials used to promote and identify themselves as builders of WaterSense labeled homes. EPA will provide review within five business days of any materials provided to the Agency prior to publishing.

4.2.3. Programs

When using the WaterSense label to identify programs that have been approved by EPA, professional certifying organizations must adhere to the terms of the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*. Specific requirements include:

- Any professional certifying organization partner must have received appropriate notification of WaterSense program acceptance.
- The WaterSense label can be used on promotional materials, brochures, advertisements, and websites promoting certification program(s) that meet EPA’s WaterSense criteria, in direct association with the qualified program.
- The label cannot be used to imply direct endorsement of a certification program or organization by EPA.

EPA requests that professional certifying organization partners provide WaterSense electronic pre-publication samples of any promotional materials using the WaterSense label to promote its recognized certification program. EPA will provide review within five business days of any materials provided to the Agency prior to publishing.

Individuals certified by a WaterSense labeled certification program cannot use the WaterSense label or partner logo but are free to use the promotional label as described in the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*. The promotional label can be used anywhere in promotional materials to generally promote WaterSense labeled products and programs.

4.3. Monitoring and Enforcement of Proper Label Use

EPA will monitor and enforce proper use of the WaterSense label in relation to products, homes, and programs. In the case of products and homes, the licensed certifying body or home certification organization that conducted the certification will provide additional oversight. Specific procedures for monitoring and enforcing the use of other WaterSense program marks are

described in more detail in [Section 4.4. Monitoring and Enforcement of Proper Use of Other Program Marks](#).

4.3.1. Products

4.3.1.1. Label Use Monitoring

As described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*, licensed certifying bodies monitor and enforce the use of the WaterSense label for the products that they certify in accordance with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*. Licensed certifying bodies monitor the use of the label through:

- Annual post-market product surveillance, such as facility/warehouse audits, product retesting, and retail outlet audits.
- Review of pre-publication materials.
- Follow-up on alerts from manufacturers, EPA, and stakeholders.

EPA reserves the right to conduct additional oversight of the product certification and labeling process as necessary, which might include but is not limited to:

- Review of accreditation body and certification body documents.
- Accompanying inspectors and/or auditors on site visits.
- Retesting of products.
- Discussions with consumers, building owners, or other users of WaterSense labeled products.

EPA also conducts its own label use monitoring activities, including:

- Literature/website reviews.
- Review of media clips.
- Internet image searches.
- Follow-up on alerts and reports from stakeholders, licensed certifying bodies, and partners.
- Periodic visits to retail establishments across the country to review use of program marks on product packaging and in stores.

4.3.1.2. Label Use Enforcement

EPA and the licensed certifying bodies are responsible for handling corrective actions for label misuses identified from the monitoring activities described above. The specific instances when EPA and/or the licensed certifying bodies handle corrective action are described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*.

For any label misuse or violations that come to EPA's attention, the Agency will notify the licensed certifying body that authorized the use of the WaterSense label for the product in question. The licensed certifying body will then investigate and resolve the complaint in accordance with the *WaterSense Product Certification System* and the licensed certifying body's policies and procedures. If no licensed certifying body is associated with the program mark or label used, EPA will follow up with the violating organization directly.

In addition, the licensed certifying body retains the right to suspend or withdraw the use of the WaterSense label for any products that it certifies, as described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*, if it discovers product nonconformance during ongoing surveillance, improper use of the WaterSense label on products or promotional materials, or infringement of the certification requirements. Unresolved, egregious, or protracted issues will be referred to the EPA Office of General Counsel or the U.S. Department of Justice for resolution.

4.3.2. Homes

4.3.2.1. Label Use Monitoring

EPA is responsible for ensuring proper use of the WaterSense label for homes and the builder and verifier promotional labels. EPA has several mechanisms for monitoring label use.

EPA reserves the right to conduct oversight of the home certification and labeling process as necessary, which might include but is not limited to:

- Review of home certification organization documents.
- Accompanying WaterSense home verifiers on site visits.
- Re-verification of sites.
- Discussions with residents of WaterSense labeled homes.

EPA will also monitor use of the builder and verifier promotional labels in accordance with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* and determine whether uses of this and other WaterSense promotional labels are appropriate. Specifically, EPA's WaterSense promotional label use monitoring activities include:

- Literature/website reviews.
- Review of media clips.
- Internet image searches.
- Follow-up on alerts and reports from stakeholders, home certification organizations, and other partners.

4.3.2.2. Label Use Enforcement

If, during its label use monitoring activities, EPA discovers a misuse of the WaterSense label or promotional label, EPA will follow up with the offending party in writing or by phone. If EPA discovers nonconformance or certification and labeling issues, it will notify the home certification organization that issued the WaterSense label to coordinate corrective action as described in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*. Violators will be given time to correct the error(s), depending upon the severity of the violation and the medium in which the violation appeared.

EPA reserves the right to suspend or withdraw the WaterSense label from homes that have previously been certified but have not been sold and occupied. The conditions and procedures for false claims, nonconformance, label suspension, reinstatement, and withdrawal are described in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*.

EPA also reserves the right to suspend or withdraw a builder's WaterSense partnership or the rights to use the WaterSense marks based on issues of nonconformity, including misuse of the WaterSense label or other marks. Any builder partner whose partnership agreement or use of the

WaterSense program marks has been revoked for any reason must remove any program marks from its print and web-based materials. Unresolved, egregious, or protracted issues will be referred to the EPA Office of General Counsel or the U.S. Department of Justice for resolution.

4.3.3. Programs

4.3.3.1. Label Use Monitoring

EPA is responsible for ensuring proper use of the WaterSense label for professional certification programs and the promotional label for certified professionals. **Note:** Certified professionals cannot use the WaterSense label nor the WaterSense partner logo; they can only use the promotional label to promote WaterSense, the program(s) through which they earned their certification(s), and water efficiency in general. EPA routinely monitors use of the WaterSense label, including, but not limited to, the review of professional certification program documents.

EPA will also monitor use of the promotional label for certified professionals in accordance with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* and determine whether uses of this and other WaterSense program marks are appropriate. Specifically, EPA's WaterSense promotional label use monitoring activities include:

- Literature/website reviews.
- Review of media clips.
- Internet image searches.
- Follow-up on alerts and reports from stakeholders, professional certifying organizations, and other partners.

4.3.3.2. Label Use Enforcement

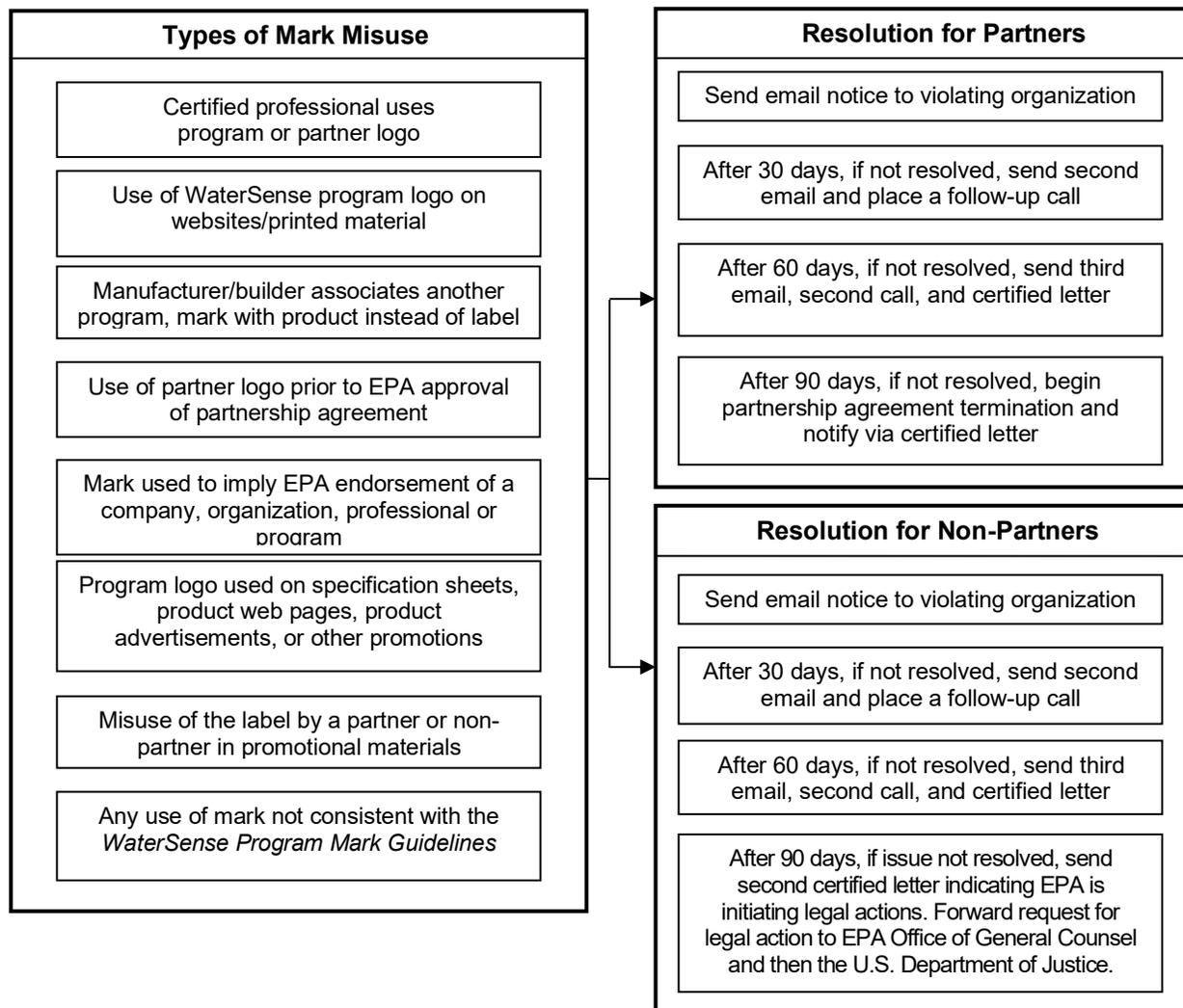
For any use violations of the WaterSense label that come to EPA's attention, the Agency sends a letter to the professional certifying organization asking that improper uses cease immediately. EPA might request proof of such a change within 90 days of the request. If a certification program is disqualified from EPA's WaterSense program for any reason, the professional certifying organization must immediately cease to use the label in conjunction with that certification program, and the label must be eliminated from all promotional materials within six months. Unresolved, egregious, or protracted issues will be referred to the EPA Office of General Counsel or the U.S. Department of Justice for resolution.

4.4. Monitoring and Enforcement of Proper Use of Other Program Marks

Proper use of the WaterSense program marks (e.g., WaterSense logo, WaterSense partner logo, WaterSense builder and verifier promotional labels) will be monitored and enforced by EPA using the procedures outlined in the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines* and summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. WaterSense Non-Label Mark⁴ Policing and Corrective Action Decision Diagram for Promotional Activities

EPA Mechanisms for Identifying Program Mark Misuse
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage partners to alert EPA as to mark misuse by other partners. • Annually review partner submittal of sample printed material. • Ask partners to report any mark misrepresentations by non-partners. • Conduct monitoring activities including water efficiency listservs, announcements, and consulting websites. • Review pre-printed materials. • Review current and future partners' websites. • Conduct Google image searches. • Utilize media tracking services. • Notification from licensed certifying bodies or home certification organizations.



⁴ Refers to all WaterSense marks with the exception of the WaterSense label for products, programs, and homes.

5. Partnerships

As described earlier, EPA partners with numerous organizations to ensure the success of the WaterSense program.

5.1. Partner Eligibility

The following categories reflect the types of organizations that are currently eligible to become WaterSense partners.

Promotional Partners: Promotional partners assist EPA in educating others about the value of water, water efficiency, and the WaterSense brand. Organizations are prohibited from earning a profit from the use of WaterSense program tools and materials. To be eligible to become WaterSense partners, organizations must educate or work with consumers or organizations located in the United States and Canada. These partners fall into one or more of the following organization types:

- **Nonprofit organizations:** Examples include environmental organizations, nonprofit professional certifying organizations, homeowners' associations, homebuilders' associations, and consumer advocacy groups.
- **Professional and trade associations:** Associations whose members are eligible to join as a WaterSense partner can also join as promotional partners. For example, because water utilities are eligible for partnership, the American Water Works Association, whose membership includes several thousand utilities, is also eligible. Trade associations that promote water-efficient products and practices to commercial and institutional facilities, such as green hotel or restaurant networks, are also eligible to partner with WaterSense.
- **Utilities, water districts, and government agencies:** Environmental departments, municipal programs, water agencies, water districts, wholesalers, public utilities, private utilities, energy utilities, wastewater treatment facilities, water boards, and public utility commissions of federal, state, provincial, and local agencies can join.

Manufacturers: Upon issuance of specifications for new product categories, EPA will announce a timeline for organizations that produce products in those categories to join as partners. This timeline might be released with the draft or final specification, depending upon the product category. All manufacturing partners must manufacture or brand at least one WaterSense labeled product that will be sold in the United States or Canada within 12 months of execution of a partnership agreement. Manufacturers often produce "private labeled" products that are sold under the brand name of a separate organization. In this case, the organization branding/selling the product (e.g., the private labeler) is treated as a separate manufacturer or retailer/distributor partner/application from the original product manufacturer. Manufacturers of component parts of a labeled product category are not eligible to sign on as WaterSense partners.

Retailers/distributors: Upon issuance of specifications for new product categories, EPA will announce a timeline for organizations that sell products in those categories to join as partners. This timeline might be released with the draft or final specification depending on the product category. All retailer and distributor partners must sell, market, and encourage the use of WaterSense labeled products to customers in the United States or Canada within 12 months of execution of a partnership agreement. Partners must sell products without requiring installation or consulting

services. Types of eligible organizations include, but are not limited to, home improvement stores, hardware stores, appliance retailers and distributors, plumbing supply houses, decorator showrooms/specialty stores, and commercial irrigation distributors.

Professional certifying organizations: Organizations that sponsor professional certification programs in the United States or Canada, meet all organizational requirements of the *Professional Certification Program Labeling System*, and offer programs that meet EPA criteria under an existing WaterSense specification for certification programs.

Builders: Home builders that construct or plan to construct homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*, promote WaterSense labeled products and WaterSense labeled homes to customers, and provide other support as specified in the certification system can join WaterSense. To be eligible for partnership, the builder must commit to build at least one home that is certified to conform to the *WaterSense Specification for Homes* within 12 months of execution of the partnership agreement and at least one home in the United States or Canada each year thereafter.

Home certification organizations: Organizations with a structure, processes, and procedures in place to conduct the verification, certification, and labeling of homes, consistent with the WaterSense Homes Certification System. The home certification organization must signify their commitment by signing a licensing agreement.

Ineligible organizations and entities: In the future, EPA might invite additional types of organizations and entities to partner with the WaterSense program. However, the following organizations and entities are currently ineligible for participation as WaterSense partners and will not be eligible until such time when EPA has established a formal role and/or draft specification(s) that are applicable to these organizations and entities:

- Consultants
- Home verifiers
- Realtors
- Commercial, institutional, and industrial facility owners and operators (unless they qualify under another category such as retailers)
- Plumbers and plumbing designers
- Landscaping professionals
- Irrigation professionals

In the interim, EPA encourages ineligible stakeholders to sign up to receive the *WaterSense Current* newsletter, participate in the specification development process, and/or contact the WaterSense Helpline at watersense@epa.gov or (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) to discuss other ways they would like to collaborate with EPA on water efficiency.

5.2. Partnership Agreements

Each organization interested in promoting the WaterSense brand, earning the WaterSense label for its products or homes, working with EPA to promote sales of WaterSense labeled products, and labeling certification programs that promote water efficiency are required to sign a WaterSense partnership agreement with EPA in order to be considered WaterSense partners. Partnership agreements are tailored to each partner type and outline the requirements of participating in the

program for each category type. Each organization signing a partnership agreement agrees to uphold the requirements of this document and the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

WaterSense partnership agreements include a discussion of the WaterSense program goals, a partner pledge, EPA's commitment to WaterSense partners, and general terms and disclaimers. The partner pledge varies slightly, depending upon the type of partner. Table 3 briefly describes the differences in expectations for different partner types.

Table 3. Partnership Pledge

Partnership Pledge:	Nonprofit Organizations	Utilities & Governments	Trade Associations	Manufacturers	Retailers & Distributors	Professional Certifying Organizations	Builders	Home Certification Organizations
Produce product(s), home(s) or program(s).				X		X	X	
Promote value of water efficiency and the meaning of the WaterSense label.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Sell and market WaterSense labeled products.				X	X		X	
Encourage eligible constituents to participate in WaterSense.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Provide data on shipment or sale of labeled products.				X	X			
Provide annual data about water efficiency promotional activities.	X	X	X	X	X		X	
Provide data on WaterSense labeled products				X	X	X	X	X
Provide data on WaterSense labeled homes and authorized verifiers.							X	X
Provide data on certified professionals.						X		
Train staff on WaterSense program.					X			X
Adhere to <i>WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines</i> .	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Feature WaterSense on website/related promotional materials.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Update EPA on continued availability of labeled product(s), home(s), or program(s).				X	X	X		X
Allow EPA to promote partner's participation in program.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

In addition to partner pledges, WaterSense partnership agreements include the following EPA commitments to partners:

- Develop national specifications for water-efficient products/programs.
- Increase awareness of water efficiency and the WaterSense brand.
- Provide current WaterSense program news.
- Provide public recognition to partners.
- Respond swiftly to partner requests for information.
- Provide materials, templates, and marks for promotional use.
- Review WaterSense promotional materials developed by partners.
- Provide tools for training sales staff on WaterSense labeled products
- Provide tools for training WaterSense home verifiers on verification of homes.
- Provide guidelines on appropriate use of the WaterSense label and advertisement of WaterSense labeled homes.

The following general terms and disclaimers are included in WaterSense partnership agreements:

- The partner will not construe, claim, or imply that its participation in the EPA WaterSense program constitutes federal government (EPA) approval, acceptance, or endorsement of anything other than the partner's commitment to the program.
- Nothing in the agreements, in and of themselves, obligates EPA to expend appropriations or enter into any contract, assistance agreement, or interagency agreement or to incur other financial obligations that would be inconsistent with Agency budget priorities. The partner agrees not to submit a claim for compensation for services rendered to EPA or any federal agency in connection with any activities it carries out in furtherance of this agreement.
- Manufacturers, retailers, distributors, and professional certifying organizations cannot sign WaterSense partnership agreements with EPA unless there has been a draft specification released for a product they produce/sell or for a relevant professional program. EPA reserves the right to delay partnerships for some categories of products. If additional WaterSense partner categories become available, affected organizations will be required to reapply for partnership in the new category.
- The partner will adhere to all requirements contained in this document.
- No product, program, home, or other structure will be labeled as a result of signing a partnership agreement.
- The partner and the EPA WaterSense program will assume good faith as a general principle for resolving conflict and will seek to resolve all matters informally, so as to preserve maximum public confidence in the program.
- Failure to comply with any of the terms of the partnership agreement can result in its termination and cessation of access to the benefits of the program, including use of the WaterSense label or partner logo.
- The EPA WaterSense program will actively pursue resolution of noncompliance related to the use of the program marks.
- Both parties concur that this agreement is wholly voluntary and can be terminated by either party at any time and for any reason with no penalty. Termination will begin effective immediately upon written notice to or from the EPA WaterSense program. Upon termination from the program, partners agree to remove the WaterSense

program marks in a timely manner, consistent with the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

5.3. Recognition

EPA recognizes WaterSense partners for their achievements in manufacturing, promoting, building with, and using water-efficient products and practices. By signing a WaterSense partnership agreement, each partner agrees to share information, when appropriate, with EPA and allows the Agency the right to publish its partner status on the WaterSense website. For more in-depth case studies, awards, and other promotions, EPA allows partners to review information before it is made public.

EPA's awards program recognizes WaterSense partners who help advance the overall mission of WaterSense and increase awareness of the WaterSense brand in a measurable way. Application materials, information on eligibility, evaluation criteria, and the schedule for the current award cycle are posted to the WaterSense partner website. A team of EPA staff evaluates applications submitted by eligible partners according to the criteria described in the application instructions. Specific criteria and point distributions might change from year to year, but broad examples of evaluation criteria include:

- Demonstrating measurable results.
- Showing creativity and innovation in promoting the program and WaterSense labeled products or homes.
- Collaborating WaterSense, partners, and stakeholders on specific campaigns or research.
- Furthering WaterSense goals and leveraging the national WaterSense brand.
- Enhancing product labeling efforts.
- Achieving effectiveness in outreach designed to educate consumers and organizations about the WaterSense program.

EPA holds an annual ceremony to recognize award winners; posts a list of award winners on the WaterSense website; and publicizes award winners in EPA materials, journal articles, newsletters, and other announcements when possible. Winners are allowed to promote their award via press releases and in paid advertisements. WaterSense Partners of the Year, Sustained Excellence Award winners, and Excellence Award winners also receive a special logo to use for promotional purposes.

5.4. Dispute Resolution and Partnership Termination

Partners and EPA assume good faith as a general principle for resolving conflicts under the WaterSense program. Both parties endeavor to resolve all matters informally, so as to preserve maximum public confidence in the WaterSense program. In the event that informal channels do not produce a mutually agreeable resolution to a matter in dispute, either party should notify the other in writing as to the nature of the dispute, the specific corrective action sought, and its intent to terminate the partnership agreement, unless specific corrective actions sought are undertaken.

Termination initiated by EPA for failure to meet terms of agreement: Within 20 days of receiving formal notification from EPA indicating intent to terminate the partnership agreement, the partner should reply, agreeing to either (1) undertake in a timely and effective manner the

corrective actions sought by EPA or (2) terminate the partnership agreement. If the partner fails to respond within 20 days or fails to undertake the requested corrective actions in a timely manner, the partnership agreement will be terminated.

Termination initiated by a partner for failure to meet terms of agreement: Within 20 days of receiving formal notification from the partner indicating its intent to terminate the partnership agreement, EPA will reply either by (1) agreeing to undertake in a timely and effective manner the corrective actions sought by the partner or (2) explaining why such corrective actions cannot be undertaken.

Termination for failure to label a product or home within the required timeframe: Within 90 days of receiving notification from EPA indicating intent to terminate the partnership agreement, the partner should reply, agreeing to either (1) undertake in a timely and effective manner the corrective actions sought by EPA or (2) terminate the partnership agreement. If the partner fails to respond within 90 days or fails to undertake the requested corrective actions in a timely manner, the partnership agreement will be terminated.

Additional requirements and procedures apply to professional certifying organizations and associated WaterSense labeled programs:

Program disqualification: Labeled certification programs can be disqualified from the WaterSense program after presentation and evaluation of credible evidence that the program does not conform to the applicable WaterSense specification. EPA staff will evaluate evidence that supports claims of nonconformance. If there is sound, credible evidence that the program does not conform to the specification, EPA submits a request to the professional certifying organization seeking explanation and satisfactory resolution of the issue. The professional certifying organization has 20 days to successfully resolve the nonconformance issue or refute the claim of nonconformance with sound, credible supporting evidence. If not satisfactorily addressed within that timeframe, the program in question will be disqualified and removed from the web registry of WaterSense labeled certification programs.

If a certification program is disqualified from EPA's WaterSense program for any reason, the professional certifying organization, as well all organizations that have adopted the labeled program, must immediately cease to use the label in conjunction with that certification program, and the label must be eliminated from all promotional materials within six months. Such disqualification also might trigger termination of the partnership agreement of the professional certifying organization.

Program requalification: Disqualified certification programs can be requalified into the program upon submittal and approval of a new application to label a professional certification program. The application for requalification should be supported with documentation proving that the factors leading to initial disqualification have been remedied. Programs will be requalified at EPA's discretion upon such a successful demonstration.

6. Measurement, Data Reporting, and Confidential Business Information

6.1. Program Measurement

EPA has developed a series of performance measures for the WaterSense program. EPA focuses on measuring national water and energy savings associated with labeled products as well as other program outputs, such as the number of program partners and labeled products.

In addition to the savings and output metrics, EPA also tracks changes in awareness and understanding of the WaterSense label; changes in market share for labeled versus non-labeled products, as reported by WaterSense manufacturer partners; and avoided costs on consumer water, wastewater, and energy utility bills. Additionally, the Agency examines customer satisfaction with the WaterSense program and reviews trends in national daily water usage. EPA also assesses program efficiency (e.g., value of earned media/investment in media outreach).

6.2. Data Reporting and Confidential Business Information

EPA relies on partners to provide data to enable it to estimate water savings and the associated avoided costs related to WaterSense labeled products and homes. EPA understands that, as part of their participation in this program, partners might provide the Agency with confidential business information (CBI), including product shipment/sales data. Partners can claim such information as CBI under 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 2, Subpart B. CBI is protected from public disclosure according to 40 CFR Part 2, Subpart B.

Specifically, WaterSense asks selected partners to submit the following data on an annual basis:

- **Product data:** Manufacturers agree to make data or other marketing indicators available to EPA on an annual basis to assist in estimating the savings associated with WaterSense labeled products, including unit shipment data and, where appropriate, aggregate product data. For example, manufacturers might be asked to provide unit shipment data for WaterSense labeled products, total unit shipments for each model in the product line, and number of total unit shipments that are WaterSense labeled. The data is treated as CBI. EPA does not release individual manufacturer data but instead will report aggregated industry-wide data.
- **Sales data:** Retailers and distributors agree to provide data on sales of water-efficient products (e.g., WaterSense labeled and non-WaterSense labeled) or other market indicators to assist in determining the impact of the program in promoting labeled products. The data is treated as CBI. EPA does not release individual retailer or distributor data but instead might report aggregate industry-wide data if desired.
- **Utility data:** WaterSense asks utility and government partners to report data on the results of promotional activities and aggregate data on rebates offered (e.g., number of rebates processed). EPA uses these data to inform future program planning and document water savings associated with rebate programs.
- **Homes data:** WaterSense requires home certification organizations to submit quarterly data on homes labeled, verifiers authorized, and marketing activities undertaken to track the market penetration of the program.
- **Professional certification data:** WaterSense asks professional certifying organization partners to provide quarterly and annual data on the individuals certified by the organization's labeled program(s).

In addition to the above annual data, EPA might also request historical data on product shipments from manufacturers and/or industry experts to assess a baseline of market penetration of water-using products. EPA uses the historical shipments data and reported data from partners to estimate the annual water savings associated with the program, and the Agency will calculate the associated environmental and economic benefits associated with these water savings. EPA also uses these figures to calculate the program's efficiency. In addition to the above, EPA might also request data on partners' satisfaction with the program to improve program services.

6.3. Ongoing Product/Program Certification

On an ongoing basis, EPA requests that licensed certifying bodies, home certification organizations, and professional certifying organizations update EPA on the status of WaterSense labeled products, homes, and programs, respectively. In particular, EPA requires that the licensed certifying bodies and home certification organizations inform EPA if labeled products or homes lose their certification. For products, this information allows EPA to keep the WaterSense web registry up-to-date. EPA also checks the licensed certifying body websites periodically to ensure that the WaterSense web registry is up to date. As necessary, EPA also requests data from professional certifying organizations to determine the implementation status of WaterSense labeled professional certification programs.

7. Definitions

Accreditation body: An authoritative body approved by EPA that performs accreditation of licensed certifying bodies in accordance with the *WaterSense Product Certification System*. The accreditation body's accreditation conveys formal demonstration that the licensed certifying body is competent to carry out product certification activities in accordance with WaterSense product specifications.

Builder/builder partner: For purposes of this program, WaterSense defines a builder as a building company or developer responsible for the design and construction of a home. Builder partners construct homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*, promote WaterSense labeled homes to consumers, and provide other support as specified in the *WaterSense Home Certification System*. See [Section 5.1 Partner Eligibility](#).

Certification program/professional certification program: A certification program that requires a combination of experience and testing to verify a professional's knowledge.

Home: A single-family or multi-family residence. (See [WaterSense Specification for Homes](#) for details.)

Home certification organization: An independent organization approved and licensed by EPA to certify and label homes.

Label certificate: A document signed by a home certification organization and home verifier upon certification of a home and given to a builder partner, signifying the home meets the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

Label sticker: An optional sticker issued by a home certification organization upon certification of a home and given to a builder partner, signifying the home meets the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

Labeling: The act of applying the WaterSense label (see definition below) to products, product packaging, homes, and/or accompanying promotional materials to market a specific product, home, or professional certification program.

Licensed certifying body: An independent third party that is licensed by EPA to conduct product certification to demonstrate that a product meets and continues to meet WaterSense's requirements for water efficiency and performance in accordance with the *WaterSense Product Certification System* and the relevant WaterSense product specification. Licensed certifying bodies also authorize manufacturers of certified products to use the WaterSense label and provide a list of certified products to EPA.

Manufacturer: See [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

Nonconformity: Failure of a WaterSense labeled product, home, or program to conform to the terms of the applicable WaterSense specification.

Partner: Any eligible organization that voluntarily signs a partnership agreement with EPA to participate in WaterSense, upon EPA acceptance of the agreement. See [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

Partnership agreement: The formal agreement between EPA and its WaterSense partners that delineates activities to be conducted by each party and benefits and exclusions. Partnership agreements are signed by appropriate representatives at EPA and organizations outlined in [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

Performance criteria: A benchmark by which products are measured for both water efficiency and functionality for intended use. Performance criteria might address water use, flow capacity, efficiency, or other product functions and factors.

Private labeled product: Any product produced by a manufacturer for labeling under a separate operation/brand from the manufacturer's operation/brand. Private labeled products are treated as separate from a manufacturer's products for purposes of partnership agreement signing. A consumer product bears a private label if:

- The product or its container is labeled with the brand or trademark of an entity other than a manufacturer of such product.
- The entity with whose brand or trademark a product or container is labeled has authorized or caused the product to be so labeled.
- The brand or trademark of a manufacturer of the product does not appear on the product or container label.

Private labeler: An owner of a brand or trademark on the label of a consumer product for market that might be eligible to meet WaterSense criteria for efficiency and performance and that is private labeled. A private labeler is included as an additional company on a WaterSense certification file or has its own WaterSense certification file (as a multiple listee) that is linked to the manufacturer's/submitter's WaterSense certification file. To be included on a WaterSense

certification file, a private labeler must have either an EPA-signed manufacturer partnership agreement (manufacturer private labeler) or retailer/distributor partnership agreement (retailer/distributor private labeler) with EPA.

Product: Merchandise, ware, or commodity offered for sale. WaterSense plans to consider the following categories of products during the lifetime of the program: commercial and residential plumbing products; commercial and residential irrigation products (e.g., controllers, sensors); and other mechanical and commercial water-using products and processes.

Product Specification: A document describing the water use and product performance attributes of products eligible to earn the WaterSense label, as well as how the attributes should be measured.

Professional certified by a WaterSense labeled program (i.e., certified professional): A professional certified by a WaterSense labeled program who has demonstrated expertise in water-efficient technologies and techniques.

Promotional partners: Entities that partner with WaterSense to assist EPA in educating others about the value of water, water efficiency, and the WaterSense brand. See [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

Promotional materials: Brochures, advertisements, fliers, catalogs, circulars, websites, displays, and related materials used to sell products, programs, or homes.

Professional certifying organization: An organization that certifies individuals on a professional level. A professional certifying organization's certification program can earn the WaterSense label if it meets a WaterSense specification for certification programs.

Retailer/distributor: See [Section 5.1. Partner Eligibility](#).

Product Specifications: A document describing the water use and product performance attributes of products eligible to earn the WaterSense label as well as how the attributes should be measured.

WaterSense home verifier (verifier): An individual who is trained and authorized by a home certification organization to verify homes in accordance with the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*. See [Section 2.3. Roles and Responsibilities](#).

WaterSense label: A service mark that contains the words "WaterSense" and "Meets EPA Criteria" in a circular pattern around the EPA WaterSense graphic "water drop" image. In conjunction with a product, the WaterSense label must also include the words "Certified by" and the name of a licensed certifying body underneath the circle. For more information on appropriate usage, refer to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

WaterSense labeled home: A home that has been independently certified via procedures described in the *WaterSense Home Certification System* and found to meet WaterSense criteria for efficiency and performance, as defined in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

WaterSense labeled product: A product that has been independently certified via procedures described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System* and found to meet WaterSense criteria for efficiency and performance, as defined in product-specific specifications.

WaterSense labeled certification program: A program that has been approved by EPA as meeting the criteria outlined in the WaterSense program specifications.

WaterSense label suspension: Temporary invalidation of product certification and subsequent WaterSense labeling as a result of product nonconformity, improper use of the WaterSense label, or infringement of the certification requirements, as described in the *WaterSense Product Certification System*. The manufacturer is prohibited from identifying as certified or associating the WaterSense label in conjunction with a product for which the WaterSense label has been suspended.

WaterSense label withdrawal: Revocation of product certification and use of the WaterSense label as a result of severe or repeated instances of product nonconformance or misuse of the WaterSense label. The manufacturer is prohibited from identifying a product as certified or associating the WaterSense label in conjunction with a product for which the label has been withdrawn. In addition, once the label is withdrawn, the manufacturer is ineligible for reinstatement of the WaterSense label for the product in question.

WaterSense program logo: A logo defined by a combination leaf/water droplet and the words “WaterSense” and “EPA,” used to promote and brand the WaterSense program. For more information on appropriate usage, refer to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

WaterSense partner logo: A logo made up of the WaterSense program logo and the word “Partner,” for use by organizations or individuals that have signed partnership agreements with EPA. For more information on appropriate usage, refer to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

WaterSense promotional label: A promotional mark that encompasses the WaterSense label with a box that includes the words “look for,” “we verify,” or “we build.” For more information on appropriate usage, refer to the *WaterSense Program Mark Guidelines*.

Web listing/registry: A listing of WaterSense labeled products and programs on the EPA website, including name/model numbers of products; certification programs; and links to manufacturers or organizations.

Appendix A - America's Water Infrastructure Act

Authorizing Language for the WaterSense Program,
America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 (Public Law No: 115-270)

SEC. 4306. WATERSENSE.

(a) WATERSENSE.—The Energy Policy and Conservation Act (42 U.S.C. 6201 et seq.) is amended by adding after section 324A the following:

“SEC. 324B. WATERSENSE PROGRAM.

“(a) Establishment Of WaterSense Program.—

“(1) **IN GENERAL.**—There is established within the Environmental Protection Agency a voluntary program, to be known as the WaterSense program, to identify and promote water-efficient products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services in order to, through voluntary labeling of, or other forms of communications regarding, such products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services while meeting strict performance criteria, sensibly—

“(A) reduce water use;

“(B) reduce the strain on public water systems, community water systems, and wastewater and stormwater infrastructure;

“(C) conserve energy used to pump, heat, transport, and treat water; and

“(D) preserve water resources for future generations.

“(2) **INCLUSIONS.**—Categories of products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services that may be included under the program include—

“(A) irrigation technologies and services;

“(B) point-of-use water treatment devices;

“(C) plumbing products;

“(D) water reuse and recycling technologies;

“(E) landscaping and gardening products, including moisture control or water enhancing technologies;

“(F) xeriscaping and other landscape conversions that reduce water use;

“(G) whole house humidifiers; and

“(H) water-efficient buildings or facilities.

“(b) Duties.—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, in coordination with the Secretary of Energy as appropriate, shall—

“(1) establish—

“(A) a WaterSense label to be used for products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services meeting the certification criteria established pursuant to this section; and

“(B) the procedure, including the methods and means, and criteria by which products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services may be certified to display the WaterSense label;

“(2) enhance public awareness regarding the WaterSense label through outreach and public education;

“(3) preserve the integrity of the WaterSense label by—

“(A) establishing and maintaining feasible performance criteria so that products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services certified

to display the WaterSense label perform as well or better than less water-efficient counterparts;

“(B) overseeing WaterSense certifications made by third parties, which shall be independent third-party product certification bodies accredited by an accreditation entity domiciled in the United States;

“(C) using testing protocols, from the appropriate, applicable, and relevant consensus standards, for the purpose of determining compliance with performance criteria; and

“(D) auditing the use of the WaterSense label in the marketplace and preventing cases of misuse;

“(4) not more frequently than every 6 years after adoption or major revision of any WaterSense performance criteria, review and, if appropriate, revise the performance criteria to achieve additional water savings;

“(5) in revising any WaterSense criteria—

“(A) provide reasonable notice to interested parties and the public of any changes, including effective dates, and an explanation of the changes;

“(B) solicit comments from interested parties and the public prior to any changes;

“(C) as appropriate, respond to comments submitted by interested parties and the public; and

“(D) provide an appropriate transition time prior to the applicable effective date of any changes, taking into account the timing necessary for the manufacture, marketing, training, and distribution of the specific product, building, landscape, process, or service category being addressed; and

“(6) not later than December 31, 2019, consider for review and revise, if necessary, any WaterSense performance criteria adopted before January 1, 2012.

“(c) **Transparency.**—The Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall, to the extent practicable and not less than annually, estimate and make available to the public the relative water and energy savings attributable to the use of WaterSense-labeled products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, and services.

“(d) **Distinction Of Authorities.**—In setting or maintaining specifications and criteria for Energy Star pursuant to section 324A, and WaterSense under this section, the Secretary of Energy and the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall coordinate to prevent duplicative or conflicting requirements among the respective programs.

“(e) **No Warranty.**—A WaterSense label shall not create any express or implied warranty.

“(f) **Methods For Establishing Performance Criteria.**—In establishing performance criteria for products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, or services pursuant to this section, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency shall use technical specifications and testing protocols established by voluntary consensus standards organizations relevant to specific products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes, or services, as appropriate.

“(g) **Definition Of Feasible.**—The term ‘feasible’ means feasible with the use of the best technology, techniques, and other means that the Administrator of the Environmental

Protection Agency finds, after examination for efficacy under field conditions and not solely under laboratory conditions, are available (taking cost into consideration).”.

(b) **Table Of Contents.**—The table of contents for the Energy Policy and Conservation Act is amended by adding after the item relating to section 324A the following:
“Sec. 324B. WaterSense program.”.