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U.S. Senate Passes Bill Calling for WaterSense Authorization, Drinking Water Infrastructural Improvements, and Emergency Infrastructure Aid

Rolling Meadows, Ill. – Date – The U.S. Senate passed the $9.4 billion Water Resources Development Act (S.2848) by a 95-3 vote today. Sponsored by Sen. James Inhofe (R-Okla.), the measure includes a provision long supported by Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI) calling for the authorization of the Environmental Protection Agency’s WaterSense program, which encourages consumers to use water-efficient toilets, faucets and showerheads.

PMI has worked closely with Sen. Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) and Senate Environment and Public Works staff on WaterSense authorization over the past few years. WaterSense authorization amendments are also included in two recently passed energy bills – the Energy Policy Modernization Act of 2016 (S.2012) and the North American Energy Security and Infrastructure Act (H.R.8). The two chambers continue to work to iron out the differences between the two energy measures.

S.2848 authorizes nearly 30 infrastructure projects for navigation, port improvements, flood control and environmental restoration, as well as $4.9 billion for drinking and clean water infrastructure over five years. The bill also provides:

- $220 million in emergency funding for communities such as Flint, Mich. having experienced lead contamination in their water supplies.
- $70 million to finance costs for up to $1 billion in secured loans for water infrastructure through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Fund at the EPA.
- About $17.5 million for a lead-exposure registry to monitor the effects on children.
- $2.5 million for an advisory committee to review ways to reduce lead exposure.

PMI recently released a position paper and infographic calling for the restoration of the national underground water infrastructure. A 2015 PMI study showed slow adoption of WaterSense products nationwide. “A recent survey conducted by PMI shows that 75 percent of Americans are unfamiliar with the WaterSense program,” said Barbara C. Higgens, PMI CEO/executive director. “Another survey we conducted showed concern among Americans regarding drinking water quality. We applaud the passage of the Senate WRDA bill, which calls for the authorization of the WaterSense program and funding for needed infrastructural improvements.”

About PMI
Plumbing Manufacturers International is the voluntary, not-for-profit international industry association of manufacturers of plumbing products, serving as the Voice of the Plumbing Industry. Member companies produce 90 percent of the nation’s plumbing products and represent more than 150 brands. As part of its mission, PMI advocates for
plumbing product performance and innovation contributing to water savings, sustainability, public health and safety, and consumer satisfaction. For information on PMI or its conferences, contact the organization at 1921 Rohlwing Road, Unit G, Rolling Meadows, IL, 60008; tel.: 847-481-5500; fax: 847-481-5501; www.safeplumbing.org.

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