

Residents of California, Other Drought-Stricken States Slow To Adopt Water-Efficient Plumbing Products, Study Says

Stronger rebate and incentive programs needed to encourage widely available water-saving plumbing products, PMI says

Rolling Meadows, Ill., - July 21, 2015 - Despite the urgent need to save water, consumers and businesses in drought-stricken states have been slow to purchase and install water-efficient toilets, showerheads and bathroom faucets, according to a study conducted by GMP Research, Inc., and commissioned by [Plumbing Manufacturers International \(PMI\)](#).

The GMP Research/PMI study found that only 5.5 percent of California's 33.5 million installed residential and commercial toilets are high-efficiency toilets using 1.28 gallons per flush – the Environmental Protection Agency's WaterSense® standard for toilets evaluated to be 20 percent more water-efficient than other plumbing products meeting federal standards. Despite the drought conditions in California, only 21.1 percent of bathroom faucets there meet the WaterSense standard of 1.5 gallons per minute (gpm) and 23.9 percent of showerheads meet the WaterSense standard of 2.0 gpm. The WaterSense program was introduced in 2006 to encourage the use of water-efficient plumbing products.

The study further found that, on average, 6.7 percent of the toilets installed nationwide are WaterSense toilets, 25.4 percent of bathroom faucets are WaterSense faucets and 28.7 percent of showerheads are WaterSense showerheads. New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania have the highest WaterSense toilet installation rates (averaging 10.0 percent), and Alabama, Kentucky, Tennessee and Mississippi the lowest (averaging 5.1 percent). Texas has the highest WaterSense showerhead installation rate (39.5 percent), and Arkansas the highest WaterSense bathroom faucet installation rate (35.1 percent). Connecticut has the lowest installation rates for both WaterSense bathroom faucets (12.7 percent) and WaterSense showerheads (13.6 percent).

Information on each of the 50 states can be obtained from PMI. States in the southern and mountain regions of the United States – more impacted by drought and water shortages than other parts of the nation – tend to have higher WaterSense showerhead and bathroom faucet installation rates than other states. Northern states from the Midwest to New England tend to have higher WaterSense toilet installation rates.

“With droughts beginning to affect more regions of the U.S., now is the time to create stronger rebates and incentives for consumers and businesses to purchase and install WaterSense plumbing products,” said Barbara C. Higgins, PMI CEO and executive director, noting that up to 360 million gallons of water a day can be saved through stronger adoption of WaterSense products in California alone. “WaterSense products are widely available now, and can quickly help to save water.”

PMI has been providing input to the California Energy Commission, the Department of Water Resources and the State Water Resources Control Board as they work to fulfill Governor Jerry Brown's executive order to develop a statewide rebate program providing monetary incentives for the purchase of water-efficient plumbing products.

“We also are reaching out to the governors of states impacted by drought to offer our point of view and assistance,” Higgins continued. [See examples of municipalities and organizations that have proactively saved water with water-efficient plumbing](#) and [PMI's WaterSense is Common Sense fact sheet](#).

“The future is now – a time when steps to sustain an ever-precious resource must be taken,” Higgins stated. “As good stewards of the environment, PMI wants everyone to know that using WaterSense plumbing products is an immediate action that can be taken to save water. There have been tremendous advancements in the technology and efficacy of plumbing products. Just as you wouldn't use a 20-year-old cell phone, it doesn't make sense to use 20-year-old plumbing technology. Using WaterSense

products is common sense. Start saving more water today.”

Methodology

During the months of March through June 2015, GMP Research reviewed the penetration rate of WaterSense certified products among the installed base of residential and commercial bathroom fixtures. According to the US Census Bureau, there are 132,833,000 existing homes, of which

- 67.4% are single family dwellings,
- 3.8% are duplexes,
- 4.5% are 3-4 unit row houses
- 4.8% are 5-9 unit row houses
- 4.5% are buildings with 10-19 units
- 8.6% are buildings with 20 or more units
- 6.4% are mobile homes.

In addition there are approximately 10 million existing light commercial properties in the United States. Light commercial buildings include hotels, restaurants, schools, nursing homes, health care facilities, retail/wholesale establishments, government buildings, gas stations, passenger terminals, sport stadiums, shopping centers, office buildings, university buildings, museums, cinemas and performing arts facilities.

GMP Research first examined the number of homes and light commercial properties per US state and then reviewed when the buildings were built and how many bathroom fixtures and fittings each property had, based on the size of the home or commercial property and the number of bathrooms per building type.

In a next step GMP Research interviewed the manufacturers of bathroom fixtures and fittings to determine the average life expectancy of a bathroom fixture/fitting, in order to determine the estimated replacement cycle for the products. Through field interviews with plumbers in all 50 states, we were able to determine on average how many homes still had the original plumbing fixtures and fittings installed, even though they technically were beyond the expected life expectancy of the product.

In a final step, we reviewed when federal legislation was enacted, determining when WaterSense products had to be installed with any new construction.

This led to a detailed and accurate assessment of the market penetration of WaterSense products installed in each of the 50 US states and cumulatively in the United States. While the study is based on certain product life expectancy assumptions, we interviewed several of the leading plumbing fixture and fittings manufacturers and plumbers and property managers to get as accurate a read as possible of the type of plumbing fixtures and fittings that are installed in the United States.

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 about 90 percent of the nation’s plumbing products. 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 more 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. Visit our website at www.safeplumbing.org.

About GMP Research

GMP Research is a global full-service market research and consulting firm located in Mount Pleasant, S.C., with affiliated partners in the Americas, Europe, Asia and Australia. GMP Research provides detailed quantitative and qualitative market intelligence for the Kitchen/Bath, HVAC-R and Building Materials industry and works with the leaders of industry. For more information, contact Victor Post, GMP Research Inc. at 843-884-9567 or vpost@gmpresearch.com