TESTIMONY OF

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U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

SUBCOMITTEE ON INTERIOR, ENVIRONMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES

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Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran and members of the subcommittee, it is indeed an honor to be here today. I welcome the opportunity to discuss the critically important issues of water-use, water-efficiency and water-conservation, and to also voice support for key programs under your jurisdiction, particularly at EPA.

My name is Peter DeMarco. I am a Senior Director for the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO). IAPMO was founded in 1926, when plumbing code officials in southern California came together to address a series of water-borne illness outbreaks and a massive drought that was plaguing the region. While IAPMO has grown over the last century, our focus on the effective delivery of safe potable water and sanitation, thus protecting public health has never wavered. You may be interested to know that more lives have been saved as a result of safe plumbing than from all medicines, vaccines and medical treatments combined. It is for this reason, IAPMO continues its mission to provide premier construction codes, product certification and education & training to the most vital industry in the world.

Today, IAPMO engages in a number of activities to help State and local code jurisdictions achieve their water and energy efficiency goals. These activities include the development of model construction codes; the development of product standards, the testing and certification of products, and the creation of educational and training programs. These efforts all work in concert to ensure that the water you drink, the plumbing systems you use, and the products you buy are safe and efficient.

With approximately 8,500 members and 29 offices worldwide, IAPMO's membership is diverse; comprised of plumbing and mechanical code officials, inspectors, engineers, manufacturers, contractors and water and energy efficiency experts.

As an international association, IAPMO's codes are adopted throughout the world. Not only do these efforts help to improve the human condition in areas such as India and Vietnam, but they also provide opportunities for U.S. businesses as hundreds of product standards are embedded in our codes. On a local level, many of you on this subcommittee, your home districts, have adopted and enforce IAPMO codes.

IAPMO plumbing, mechanical, solar and swimming pool codes are developed employing a voluntary consensus process accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). We proudly publish our model codes as designated American National Standards. This commitment to transparency, openness, impartiality and consensus in our code development process is a big reason why our expertise is so widely respected.

In 2010, IAPMO published the first-ever green construction code in the United States, the *IAPMO Green Plumbing and Mechanical Code Supplement.* By adhering to the water-efficiency provisions found within the Green Supplement, a 35 percent savings in water use over baseline plumbing codes and EPAct level requirements can be attained in both residential and commercial buildings.

However, as we continue to demand greater efficiencies in our water usage it is critically important that we gain a better understanding of the ramifications this has on our plumbing systems as water flows from plumbing fixtures, appliances and commercial equipment are reduced. In 2009, IAPMO was a founding member of the Plumbing Efficiency Research Coalition (PERC)[i], created to conduct needed research to support the successful use of water efficient plumbing products. The Memorandum of Understanding that underpinned the formation of PERC was signed at EPA headquarters with then-Administrator Steven Johnson presiding.

In 2012, PERC issued its first research report, *The Drainline Transport of Solid Waste in Buildings*[ii]. This research was conducted with funding obtained entirely from the private sector. The bad news is that it took PERC two years to obtain the relatively small amount of funding necessary to conduct this research. Nonetheless, the PERC research has been very well received and subsequent studies will help to inform code officials, plumbing engineers and plumbers regarding the consequences of reduced flows in our building drains.

We all realize the importance of water. Yet, the federal government is doing so very little in terms of supporting needed research on the unintended consequences of water efficiency in the built environment. Therefore, we encourage the committee to have the Department of Interior and the EPA support these research efforts in terms of both funding dollars and towards supplying technical resources.

Just last week, President Obama unveiled his budget for Fiscal Year (FY) 2014. In this budget, the President requests approximately $8.1 billion for the EPA, a decrease of nearly $300 million over FY 2012. We all understand the budget constraints facing our country, but we'd encourage the subcommittee to recommend that the EPA not relay these cuts to the critically important and valuable WaterSense program. According to the EPA, WaterSense has to date helped consumers save a cumulative 287 billion gallons of valuable, energy laden treated potable water and over $4.7 billion in water and energy bills.

WaterSense is a great example of a federal program that truly delivers a “triple bottom line” result. In addition to supporting water efficiency measures that reduce the impact on our environment and helps consumers save money, manufacturers of high efficiency toilets, urinals, faucets, showerheads and other products are benefitting from this effective, voluntary labeling program. The staff of WaterSense should be commended for their phenomenal work. Any cuts to WaterSense would be short-sighted and detrimental to water efficiency efforts.

Additionally, IAPMO is aware of the critical water issues facing Indian reservations throughout our country, yet very little effort has been devoted to provide desperately needed training to our Native Americans. IAPMO has full-time staff devoted to creating ANSI-accredited training programs to provide education and life-changing skills in the trades; including proper installation of rainwater catchment systems, the proper installation and maintenance of gray-water systems, correct installation of septic systems and back-flow prevention training. We ask the committee to encourage the Bureau of Indian affairs to seek accredited training programs that would bring much needed skills to these remote reservations—skills that will remain within that community to benefit all. Our international experience has demonstrated how effective these training programs are and we certainly recommend that such programs be deployed for beneficial use on Indian reservations.

Finally, I would like to briefly call this esteemed Committee’s attention to two additional programs pertaining to water and energy efficiency. Every year, the National Institute of Building Sciences (NIBS) issues a report to the President of the United States. For the past three years, I have served as chair on the Energy and Water Efficiency Topical Committee for the NIBS Consultative Council. This year’s report will highlight specific research need areas that will work towards improving the energy and water efficiency of our nation’s buildings. These recommendations represent the consensus of construction community.

Going forward, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has established the Energy Efficiency Standardization Coordination Collaborative (EESCC). The objective of the Collaborative is to assess the energy and water efficiency standardization landscape, and carry out the development of an EESCC roadmap and compendium. The standardization roadmap is intended to identify what standards, codes, and conformance programs are available or under development, what gaps exist, and what additional standardization activities are needed to advance energy and water efficiency in the United States; and to support the adoption and implementation of standards, codes, and conformance activities among the public and private sectors. I hope all on this Committee will make a point of carefully reviewing these important efforts while determining the budgetary priorities for our Nation.

In closing, we understand there are many important and valuable programs for which your committee determines funding levels. Therefore, I would implore the committee to look at the programs and potential initiatives mentioned as these are truly bipartisan, widely-supported programs that cost so little but achieve so much.

Chairman Simpson, Ranking Member Moran and members of the subcommittee, as you know, there is no substitute for water. While I recognize the ingenuity and innovation that our country has demonstrated time and time again over the years, the fact remains that will never be able to find a replacement for this precious resource and the time to address our nation's looming water related concerns is now as these problems will only be compounded as our population grows. Again, I appreciate your time today and look forward to answering any questions you might have. Thank you.

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[i] PERC is comprised of IAPMO, the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE), the American Society of Plumbing Engineers (ASPE), The International Code Council (ICC), The Plumbing – Heating – Cooling Contractors Association (PHCC) and the Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI).

[ii] *The Drainline Transport of Solid Waste in Buildings* is available for download, along with all supporting data, at http://www.plumbingefficiencyresearchcoalition.org/