Application for Home Certification Organization (HCO) and

Proposed Certification Method (PCM) Approval

A prospective Home Certification Organization (HCO) seeking approval from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) WaterSense® program of its Proposed Certification Method (PCM) and oversight practices to certify and label homes for WaterSense should complete this application. The application requests information on the prospective HCO’s certification procedures and the PCM that will be used to certify and label homes for WaterSense. As described in the [*WaterSense Home Certification System*](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/certification-systems#tab-2)*,* EPA will use the completed application and any supporting materials to evaluate whether:

1. The prospective HCO meets the organizational requirements to be licensed as a WaterSense HCO;
2. The prospective HCO’s PCM was developed using one of the approved development processes; and
3. The prospective HCO’s PCM can effectively differentiate homes that meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes*.

If a prospective HCO is interested in applying, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at watersense@epa.gov prior to completing this application to have a preliminary discussion about EPA’s requirements for HCOs.

After completing the application, a prospective HCO may:

**Email this form and attachments to: OR Mail this form and attachments to:**

WaterSense Helpline EPA WaterSense Program watersense@epa.gov c/o ERG

2300 Wilson Boulevard

Suite 350

Arlington, VA 22201

For more information, please contact the WaterSense Helpline at (866) WTR-SENS (987-7367) or watersense@epa.gov.

**Section A: General HCO and PCM Information**

Prospective Home Certification Organization Name:

How to Refer to the HCO on EPA’s Website (if different):

Contact Name:

Address:

City:       State:       ZIP:

Telephone:       Fax:

Email:

HCO Website (if applicable):

PCM Website (if applicable):

PCM Building Eligibility (select all that apply):

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Single-family* |  | *Multifamily* |
| *[ ]*  | New Construction |  | *[ ]*  | New Construction |
| *[ ]*  | Existing Construction |  | *[ ]*  | Existing Construction |

Geographic region in which PCM will be available:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| *[ ]*  | National |
| *[ ]*  | Regional |  | List Applicable States or Counties: |       |
| *[ ]*  | Local |  | List Applicable County(ies) or City(ies): |       |

*Provisional Approval*

EPA retains the right to provisionally approve an HCO for select requirements where an HCO requires modifications to fully adhere to EPA’s organizational and certification method development requirements, as set forth in Sections 4.1, 4.2 (if applicable), and 4.3 of the *WaterSense Home Certification System*. Requirements that may be considered for provisional approval are indicated with an asterisk (\*) in the sections below. For any requirement for which an HCO is provisionally approved, EPA will work with the HCO to develop a plan that outlines the conditions and timeline for full compliance with the requirements.

*By signing this application, I confirm that all the information included in this form is accurate and true, and that the organization named above is structured so as to give confidence in its competence and integrity as an HCO such that it will not allow commercial, financial, or other interests to compromise its impartiality.*

Signature:       Date:

Note: Please review the [*WaterSense Home Certification System*](https://www.epa.gov/watersense/certification-systems#tab-2) before completing this application. For reference, EPA has identified in parentheses the relevant section(s) of the *WaterSense Home Certification System* that detail the specific requirements.

**Section B: Documentation of Organizational Requirements (WaterSense Home Certification System, Section 4.0)**

The prospective HCO must submit in separate documentation the relevant procedures and include where EPA can find information related to each organizational requirement in the procedures. If the procedures described below are not part of an existing procedural document for the organization, please attach a separate written narrative describing how the prospective HCO will fulfill the requirement(s) and/or reference appropriately below.

Section B.1: Use of Designees (WaterSense Home Certification System, Sections 4.0 and 4.2)

The prospective HCO may delegate certain organizational requirements to a designee(s) (see Section 4.2 of the *WaterSense Home Certification System* for a list of exceptions). A designee can be a provider or other organization/individual capable of adhering to WaterSense’s certification requirements, as relevant to the specific responsibility being delegated.

Does the prospective HCO intend to use designee(s) in its fulfilment of any of the responsibilities related to WaterSense? Select one:

*[ ]* Yes *[ ]* No

If yes, please use the boxes in the following sections to elaborate on the role of designee(s) in meeting the applicable requirements. Also indicate the relevant supporting documentation that describes the policies each designee is required to follow and the prospective HCO’s procedures for overseeing the designee(s) and the fulfillment of their responsibilities, including the process by which the prospective HCO will remove a designee if they fail to meet the prospective HCO’s requirements.

*Section B.2: Independent Oversight (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.1.1)\**

*The HCO shall maintain independent oversight procedures to ensure that the certification and labeling of homes for WaterSense is governed in a fair and impartial manner.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established procedures for independent oversight. The HCO may demonstrate independent oversight by maintaining an independent oversight committee(s) or by maintaining an organizational infrastructure that prohibits personnel responsible for institutional oversight from being involved in routine oversight of the certification decision.If the information is included in the supporting documentation, use the left two columns to indicate the title of the document and the section/page numbers. Otherwise, use the right column to briefly describe the prospective HCO’s procedures.

| **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** | **Briefly Describe Independent Oversight Related to WaterSense** |
| --- | --- | --- |
|       |       |       |

*Section B.3: Quality Assurance (*WaterSense Home Certification System*,* *Section 4.1.2)*

*The HCO shall implement quality assurance procedures that ensure that verifiers consistently inspect and document compliance in accordance with the* WaterSense Specification for Homes, *which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO’s WaterSense Approved Certification Method (WACM).*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established procedures for each element of quality assurance. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Quality Assurance Element** | **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| Labeled Home Auditing |       |       |
| Verifier Qualification |       |       |
| Verifier Discipline |       |       |
| Complaint Resolution\* |       |       |
| Quality Assurance Documentation |       |       |
| **Briefly describe how the elements of quality assurance (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements:** |
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\*Eligible for provisional approval

*Section B.4: Verifier Training and Authorization (*WaterSense Home Certification System*,* *Section 4.1.3)*

*The HCO shall train and authorize verifiers to verify homes in accordance with the* WaterSense Specification for Homes, *which includes the Mandatory Checklist and, by reference, the technical requirements of the HCO’s WACM, as well as any administrative practices used by the HCO for oversight of the certification process, reporting, or other communications.*

Use the table on the next page to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established procedures for verifier training and authorization. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

|  |  |  |
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| **Verifier Training Element** | **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| Verifier Training |       |       |
| Verifier Training Reciprocity\* |       |       |
| Verifier Authorization |       |       |
| Update Integration\* |       |       |
| **Briefly describe how the verifier training elements (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements:** |
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\*Eligible for provisional approval

*Section B.5: Home Verification Protocols (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.1.4)*

*The HCO shall implement home verification protocols.*

Use the table below to identify the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the relevant verification procedures. Include a reference to the document that describes the home verification protocols. If relying on a designee to develop and implement home verification, include a reference to the procedures for evaluating and approving each designee’s home verification protocols. The prospective HCO may offer WaterSense builder partners the opportunity to participate in a sampling protocol if a builder partner intends to certify multiple homes within the same subdivision, planned community, or multifamily building.

Is sampling allowed? Select one:

*[ ]* Yes *[ ]* No

If yes, include a reference to the document that describes the sampling protocol in the table below.

| **Home Verification Requirement** | **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Home Verification Protocols  |       |       |
| Sampling Protocol (if applicable) |       |       |
| Verifier Adherence to Verification Protocols |       |       |
| Verification of Builder Partnership with WaterSense |       |       |
| Maintenance of Verification Documentation |       |       |
| **Briefly describe how the elements of home verification (listed above) are conducted, including the use of designees to fulfill any of the requirements:** |
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Please describe how the prospective HCO intends to incorporate the Mandatory Checklist into verification protocols.

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*Section B.6: Impartiality (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.1.5)*

*The HCO shall have a systematic method for ensuring financial, legal, and ethical impartiality as it pertains to verifying a home’s compliance with the* WaterSense Specification for Homes *and the HCO’s WACM, and as it pertains to issuing the WaterSense label. The HCO’s impartiality management strategy shall account for both organizational and individual conflicts of interest (COI). Organizational COI pertains to the organization(s) responsible for various aspects of home verification and certification, whereas individual COI pertains to a specific person involved in the verification or certification decision.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established the relevant procedures for impartiality. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Impartiality Requirement** | **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| HCO Impartiality |       |       |
| Verifier Impartiality |       |       |
| Designee Impartiality (if applicable) |       |       |
| **Briefly describe how the impartiality requirements (listed above) are implemented:** |
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*Section B.7: Messaging and Reporting (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.1.6)\**

*The HCO shall ensure information flow from WaterSense to the HCO (messaging) and information flow from the HCO to WaterSense (reporting). The HCO shall also ensure that relevant information is conveyed in a timely manner among WaterSense and the HCO’s designee(s), builders, and verifiers.*

Use the table below to demonstrate that the prospective HCO has established the relevant procedures for messaging and reporting. Indicate the title of the relevant document and the section/page numbers that describe the procedures.

| **Messaging and Reporting Requirement** | **Title of Relevant Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Centralized Messaging Structure\* |       |       |
| Inquiry Response System\* |       |       |
| **Briefly describe how messaging and reporting are implemented, including requirements for designee and verifier reporting to the prospective HCO:** |
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\*Eligible for provisional approval

*Section B.8: Maintaining Final Authority of the WaterSense Label (*WaterSense Home Certification System*,* *Sections 4.2 and 5.3)*

The HCO may not relinquish its final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label. Briefly describe, or provide reference to documentation of, the prospective HCO’s procedures for maintaining final authority over the certification decision and issuance of the WaterSense label.

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**Section C: Certification Method Development Process (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.3)**

*In developing the technical requirements included in the PCM, the HCO shall follow one of the three approaches outlined below to demonstrate that the requirements were developed following an open and transparent process.*

Select the certification method development process that applies to the PCM under consideration and complete only the relevant section below:

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| --- | --- |
| *[ ]*  | Utilizes an American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved standard or standard developed through an equivalent consensus-based standard development process. |
| *[ ]*  | Follows requirements for the jurisdiction with authority (for programs run by public agencies). |
| *[ ]*  | Demonstrates development in accordance with the certification method alternative development requirements (based on the ANSI Essential Requirements). |

*Section C.1: Utilizes an ANSI Approved Standard*

Name of ANSI (or equivalent) Standard:

List any deviations from the standard’s requirements that the prospective HCO intends to implement for the purpose of WaterSense certification. If using an equivalent consensus-based standard, complete Section C.3 to explain how the standard development process is equivalent:

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*Section C.2: Follows Requirements for the Jurisdiction With Authority (for Programs Operated by Public Agencies)*

Name of Jurisdiction With Authority:

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Title and relevant section/page numbers of the administrative and transparency requirements for standards and policy development of the jurisdiction having authority (include a copy of the requirements with the application):

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*Section C.3: Demonstrates Development in Accordance With the Certification Method Alternative Development Requirements*

Complete the table below identifying the specific supporting documentation that describes how each criterion wasmet.

| **Criteria** | **Supporting Documentation** | **Section/Page Numbers** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Openness |       |       |
| Lack of Dominance |       |       |
| Balance |       |       |
| Notification of Certification Method Development |       |       |
| Consideration of Views and Objections |       |       |
| Consensus Vote |       |       |
| Appeals |       |       |
| **If necessary, provide additional information describing the certification method development process:** |
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On a case-by-case basis, EPA will evaluate and may provisionally approve a PCM that meets the intent of the alternative development requirements to provide sufficient public discourse but may have limited shortcomings or other concerns at the time of application. However, the prospective HCO will need to demonstrate it has met the burden of public discourse and assume responsibility for any changes that may occur to the PCM. In such cases, EPA will work with the prospective HCO to develop a compliance plan and establish clear timelines for ultimately meeting all alternative development requirements.

**Section D: Proposed Certification Method Requirements (*WaterSense Home Certification System*, Section 4.4)**

*EPA shall evaluate the technical effectiveness of the PCM in accordance with its* WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods *to ensure that the PCM can differentiate homes that meet the efficiency requirement in the* WaterSense Specification for Homes*. Upon approval, the PCM becomes the HCO’s WACM that can be used in conjunction with the Mandatory Checklist to verify a home’s compliance with the* WaterSense Specification for Homes*.*

Review the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods* to understand how EPA will evaluate the technical effectiveness of the PCM.

1. Provide a copy of the PCM.
2. Identify PCM Water Efficiency Thresholds and Criteria.

Identify the thresholds or criteria (e.g., prescriptive requirements, number of points, rating score, certification level) that the prospective HCO intends to use to meet the water efficiency requirement in the *WaterSense Specification for Homes* and that the prospective HCO subsequently intends to stipulate for homes to earn the WaterSense label. Provide additional documentation if necessary.

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1. Describe Nuances of the PCM for Consideration in EPA’s Technical Evaluation.

Describe any nuances of the PCM that will facilitate EPA’s technical evaluation. Provide additional documentation if necessary.

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1. Provide Justification for Any Additional Water Savings Credit.

If the PCM includes requirements for features not specifically included or the prospective HCO believes are not adequately accounted for in the *WaterSense Technical Evaluation Process for Approving Home Certification Methods*, submit technical justification for EPA’s consideration in assessing appropriate credit for the requirement. This justification shall include:

* + - The expected effect on water use per household per day or per occupant per day for standard models or standard design.
		- The expected water savings per household per day or per occupant per day from incorporation of more efficient product models or system design.
		- Studies, data, and other supporting materials on the use of the specific design or technology in the field that support the prospective HCO’s claims.
		- For systems that supply alternative water sources (such as rainwater or greywater systems), the temporal resolution with which water collection and use is calculated.
		- For systems that supply alternative water sources (such as rainwater or greywater systems), the percentage of useful water that the system is anticipated to yield after treatment.

Does the prospective HCO wish to request consideration for additional water savings credit?

*[ ]* Yes *[ ]* No

If yes, provide appropriate justification per the requirements listed above (or attach documentation separately if more space is needed).

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