



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OFFICE OF
WATER

November 7, 2019

Dear Interested Party:

WaterSense® is a voluntary partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that seeks to help consumers and businesses identify water-saving products, programs, services, and homes. Products and programs that earn the WaterSense label are independently certified to use at least 20 percent less water and perform as well or better than standard models.

Residential outdoor water use in the United States accounts for nearly 8 billion gallons of water each day, mainly for landscape irrigation. As much as half of this water is wasted due to evaporation, wind, or runoff that can be caused by improper irrigation system design, installation, maintenance, or scheduling. The most common method used to schedule irrigation is a manually programmed clock timer that irrigates for a specified amount of time on a preset schedule programmed by the homeowner or landscape professional, often irrespective of landscape water needs. To help address inefficient irrigation scheduling, the EPA published a *WaterSense Specification for Weather-Based Irrigation Controllers* in 2011.

To provide consumers with additional options for addressing inefficient irrigation scheduling, EPA has published a *WaterSense Draft Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Control Technologies*. This draft specification is a culmination of the EPA's research and coordination with industry since 2006 to develop performance criteria that can identify products that effectively tailor irrigation schedules to meet landscape water needs based on measurements of moisture in the soil. Once labeled, soil moisture-based irrigation control technologies, also referred to as soil moisture sensors (SMSs), along with other WaterSense labeled products, will provide consumers with a variety of options reduce water waste outdoors and promote plant health.

Once the specification is finalized and products can earn the label, a household with an automated in-ground irrigation system and average outdoor water use could save more than 15,000 gallons of water per year by installing a WaterSense labeled SMS. Equipping or replacing all standard clock-timers in residential irrigation systems across the United States with WaterSense labeled SMSs could save more than 390 billion gallons of water nationally each year.

Earning the WaterSense Label for SMSs

The *WaterSense Draft Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Control Technologies* provides the proposed criteria that an SMS must meet in order to earn the WaterSense label. The specification is designed to ensure sustainable, efficient water use.

With the release of this draft specification, manufacturers, retailers and distributors that produce or sell SMSs are welcome to join the program as WaterSense partners. Following the close of the comment period, the EPA will review all comments and provide a summary for public review. Once the specification is finalized, WaterSense manufacturer partners can submit product applications to WaterSense licensed certifying bodies for SMS certification and labeling.

Providing Input on the Draft Specification

The EPA welcomes your input on the *WaterSense Draft Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Control Technologies*. The release also includes associated supporting materials, including the *WaterSense Draft Specification for Soil Moisture-Based Irrigation Control Technologies Supporting Statement* and *Draft WaterSense Labeled Soil Moisture Sensors Notification Template*. All interested parties are encouraged to review the draft specification and supporting materials and email their written comments no later than **January 10, 2020**.

Please note that the test method referred to in the draft specification, the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) X633 *Testing Protocol for Landscape Soil Moisture-Based Control Technologies*, is open for public comment until December 2. To request a copy of the draft standard for comment, please see the ASABE contact information listed on the SMS webpage under "Additional information."

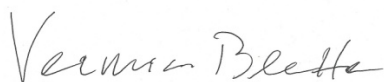
The EPA will accept written comments on the WaterSense draft specification and plans to hold a public meeting via teleconference and webinar to discuss stakeholder feedback. The public meeting is scheduled for November 20, 2019, from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time. Details regarding webinar registration can be found on the [WaterSense website](#). The EPA will also present an informational session at the Irrigation Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, on December 5, 2019, at 10:00 a.m. Pacific Time.

Written comments should be directed to watersense-products@erg.com. All comments, except data claimed as confidential business information (CBI), become a part of the public record. Information that qualifies as CBI can be submitted as such through the EPA's contractor, Eastern Research Group, Inc. (ERG) as described below. Sensitive business information can be claimed confidential under 40 CFR Part 2 Subpart B. ERG has an EPA-approved security plan in place to protect CBI from unauthorized disclosure. All data submitted as confidential will be handled as such. CBI should not be submitted electronically but can be submitted as a hardcopy document or on a CD, DVD or flash drive. Data submitted as CBI will not become a part of the public record unless aggregated and masked to conceal the identity of the submitter.

Data claimed as CBI should be submitted to:
Eastern Research Group, Inc.
Attn: WaterSense Helpline
2300 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 350
Arlington, VA 22201

If you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Tanner at (202) 564-2660 or tanner.stephanie@epa.gov, or the WaterSense Helpline at (866) 987-7367 or watersense@epa.gov. We look forward to receiving your feedback on the draft specification, as well as your organization's participation with WaterSense.

Sincerely,



Veronica Blette, Chief
WaterSense Branch