



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**To Celebrate World Water Day, IAPMO Supports Bipartisan Bill  
to Address Nation's Plumbing Needs**

**Washington, D.C. (March 22, 2022)** — More than 2 billion people worldwide — including more than 2 million Americans — live without access to running water, basic indoor plumbing, or proper sanitation. The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO®) is determined to close the world's water gap.

In celebration of World Water Day, IAPMO, along with Global Health Council, InterAction, Millennium Water Alliance, UNICEF USA, WaterAid America, World Vision, World Wildlife Fund, is hosting a Congressional WASH briefing titled "Water, Water, Everywhere: A Building Block for Global Security." This event is in conjunction with the Congressional International Water and Sanitation Caucus, chaired by Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), Rep. Darin LaHood (R-Ill.), Rep. Grace Meng (D-N.Y.), and Rep. Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.). It will highlight the important role the United States plays in helping countries address their water security challenges. It further builds on IAPMO's continued partnership with USAID and the U.S. Department of Commerce to expand water and sanitation access by utilizing the best resources from U.S. industry.

In addition to the congressional briefing, IAPMO is also pleased to endorse a new bill led by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) and co-sponsored by Sen. Martin Heinrich (D-N.M.). This new legislation, the *Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Sector Development Act of 2022* (WASH Act), aims to address the running water and basic indoor plumbing needs of underserved Americans.

"Between historic drought and increasingly outdated infrastructure, Western communities are in desperate need of federal help to shore up access to clean drinking water and safe sanitation," Wyden said. "Access to clean drinking water is a human right, and this legislation is a key piece of the puzzle in helping identify just how far reaching the water access gap is, and then responding with investments supporting those communities to close that gap across Oregon and nationwide."

The WASH Act will improve both data on water and sanitation access, and expand options for water service delivery, by establishing a Water and Sanitation Needs Working Group to more accurately survey households in the United States that do not have complete access to water and sanitation services, and it establishes a pilot grant program designed to expand options for decentralized water service infrastructure.

"Access to clean water and safe sanitation are basic human rights," says Dain M. Hansen, IAPMO executive vice president of Government Affairs. "On World Water Day — and every day — our mission at IAPMO is to leverage our resources and expertise to help address this critical national and worldwide issue. We are confident that these types of programs and policies, along with working with like-minded partners, will improve the quality of life for millions of the world's citizens who struggle to access and reap the benefits of one of our most precious resources: water."

Today's congressional briefing and the introduction of the WASH Act are just a couple of the several wide-ranging initiatives in which IAPMO and IAPMO's philanthropic arm, the International, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH), are engaged in this month. They are working collaboratively with plumbing industry colleagues, government agencies, non-profits, and other organizations toward a common goal of clean drinking water and safe sanitation for all. Some of these include:

- **Investing in solutions that expand access to water and sanitation systems that are both adequate and effective.** This is especially critical in underserved communities without any plumbing pipes or plumbing infrastructure, or with inadequate systems in parts of Hawaii, Alaska, Alabama, Appalachia, Central Valley (California) and Navajo Nation.

Last week, IWSH sponsored a Community Plumbing Challenge (CPC) program in Alabama. In collaboration with the Black Belt Unincorporated Wastewater Program (BBUWP) and LIXIL, IAPMO and IWSH arranged to provide plumbing repairs and upgrades to homes in Lowndes County, Alabama — an area of the country where on-site sewage disposal systems fail and residents resort to “straight piping,” which releases sewage right into homeowners’ yards. EPA Administrator Michael Regan recently toured Lowndes County to see the dire conditions personally.

- **Providing funding support for an economic impact study that aims to quantify the dollar-for-dollar impact of investing in U.S. water access.** IAPMO was also pleased to join DigDeep, Altarum, and the American Heart Association in presenting the preliminary findings of new research on the economic benefits of closing the U.S. water access gap. Preliminary findings indicate that every dollar spent on safe sanitation yields a 4.6X return in terms of societal health care cost reduction. The full report is expected to be released by Dig Deep next month.
- **Providing Policy Solutions to America’s Sanitation Access Gap.** IAPMO has been pleased to lead a technical advisory board for the Decentralized Wastewater Innovation Cohort led by DigDeep. This community-led research initiative has focused for the last year on decentralized wastewater challenges, solutions, and policy opportunities in communities across the United States. At the end of March, a roundtable discussion hosted by USEPA, USDA, and DigDeep will present the key findings of this effort.
- **Providing critical insights on job training, product certification and other plumbing resources to address less advantaged areas.** This includes offering technical assistance to state and local elected officials as they allocate resources authorized by the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. The \$500 billion in funding to fix water-related issues such as lead pipes is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. It also provides much needed opportunities to help provide modern hygiene infrastructure for all Americans by installing safe and effective decentralized wastewater systems in communities without adequate access to sanitation.

For more information on job training, product certification, and other plumbing resources to address the water needs of less advantaged areas, visit [www.IAPMOGR.org](http://www.IAPMOGR.org).

#### **ABOUT WORLD WATER DAY**

World Water Day is an annual United Nations Observance, started in 1993, that celebrates water and raises awareness of the 2 billion people currently living without access to safe water. A core focus of World Water Day is to inspire action towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 6: water and sanitation for all by 2030.

#### **ABOUT IWSH**

The International Water, Sanitation and Hygiene Foundation (IWSH) is the philanthropic arm of the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO®). For more information, visit [www.iwsh.org](http://www.iwsh.org)

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*Sponsor of the Uniform Codes, IAPMO® – The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials – works in concert with government and industry for safe, sanitary plumbing and mechanical systems. Learn more about IAPMO at [www.iapmo.org](http://www.iapmo.org).*