



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **IAPMO Supports Launch of Bipartisan Congressional Caucus Dedicated to Clean Water**

**Washington, D.C. (Sept. 15, 2020)** — A bipartisan group of lawmakers Tuesday joined forces to bring greater attention to the global need for clean water, sanitation, and hygiene. U.S. Reps. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.), Darin LaHood (R-Ill.), Xochitl Torres-Small (D-N.M.), and Jackie Walorski (R-Ind.) officially launched the International Water and Sanitation Caucus along with eight other founding members. The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) is pleased to play a leading role in a coalition of private sector organizations that will support the efforts of the new caucus.

The caucus will provide focused oversight and advocacy around water and sanitation issues, which are central to U.S. and global health, economic productivity, ecosystem functions, and national security. Worldwide, 785 million people lack access to clean drinking water and 2 billion do not have access to proper sanitation. Future projections are even more sobering, with 2.9 billion people in 28 countries facing water shortages in the next decade.

In launching the International Water and Sanitation Caucus, the congressional co-chairs emphasized both the necessity and worth of the venture.

**Rep. Blumenauer:** "Extreme weather events, like the devastating wildfires burning throughout my home state, are a reminder of the destructive threats posed by the current climate emergency. This climate crisis will only expedite the water scarcity faced by billions, putting some of the most vulnerable populations at an even greater risk. Access to clean, safe drinking water and sanitation is not only essential in the prevention of unnecessary disease and death, it is a basic human right."

**Rep. LaHood:** "Inadequate water and sanitation around the world is a risk to America's national security and our global health. As a global health leader, the United States must elevate the importance of sanitation and access to clean water, which has been further illuminated by the COVID-19 pandemic. I am proud to join Congressman Blumenauer in launching the International Water and Sanitation Caucus and I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to emphasize these important issues."

**Rep. Torres-Small:** "In New Mexico, we know firsthand that water is life. But, as my colleagues know, whether you live in New Mexico, Oregon, Illinois, or Indiana, access to clean, safe drinking water, sanitation, and hygiene is essential. I am proud to help form the International Water and Sanitation Caucus as a bipartisan space to work across the aisle with members who share the same commitment to addressing water scarcity and invest in solutions that work for us all."

**Rep. Walorski:** "Access to clean water for drinking, sanitation and hygiene is necessary to improve health and wellness, promote social resiliency, and strengthen the global economy. I'm excited to join my colleagues in launching the bipartisan International Water and Sanitation Caucus to explore challenges and solutions surrounding access to safe water and proper hygiene in communities across our country and around the world."

Improving access to water and sanitation has an impact on U.S. industry. The U.S. economy and economic recovery require global consumers for American goods and services, as do the 1-in-5 American jobs tied to international trade. This is underscored by the fact 80% of global purchasing power lies outside the United States. Improving global access to water, sanitation and hygiene ("WASH") adds more than \$60 billion to the world economy annually, returning \$4.30 for every \$1 invested. Conversely, poor sanitation and water supply result in estimated economic losses of \$260 billion annually in developing countries (1.5% of GDP). With 11 of the top-15 U.S. trade partners once recipients of U.S. foreign assistance, increasing WASH access is a key to moving beneficiaries from aid to trade.



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“Improving access to water and sanitation services globally is key to growing international trade and improving economic security,” said IAPMO CEO GP Russ Chaney. “We not only change lives and communities, but we also remove barriers to trade, align market access requirements, and build skilled workforces that understand the value of U.S. products and services.”

Founding co-chairs Blumenauer and LaHood today laid out the importance of the caucus in a joint op-ed in *USA Today*, which can be read at <https://amp.usatoday.com/amp/5790495002>.

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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).*