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### **Plumbing Industry Supports Legislation That Will Improve Water Quality and Efficiency**

**Washington, D.C. (August 5, 2021)** — The IAPMO Group and Plumbing Manufacturers International (PMI) applauded the House Science, Space and Technology Committee for advancing legislation this past week reauthorizing the National Institute of Standards and Technology and calling for the creation of a program for premise plumbing research.

During the July 27 committee mark-up of the bill, U.S. Rep. Paul Tonko (D-N.Y.) was successful in offering an important amendment to H.R. 4609, the National Institute of Standards and Technology for the Future Act of 2021, that would authorize funding at NIST to conduct practical, water-related research on systems within homes and buildings, addressing critical issues such as water quality, efficiency, reuse, sustainability, and resilience.

A new program at NIST will help to combat a 900% increase in Legionnaires' disease since 2000. Legionnaires' disease is an infection caused by the bacteria Legionella. Symptoms of the disease include fever, cough and pneumonia, while a milder infection can look like a flu-like illness without pneumonia. The sickness can be deadly in older patients or those with other risk factors. Reports of the infection are more common in the summer and early fall when warming, stagnant waters present the best environment for bacterial growth in water systems. News articles from across the country detail the prevalence of this public health challenge.

"From the exponential growth of Legionnaires' disease outbreaks to increasing housing affordability, the industry is waiting and ready to apply the findings of this research to tackle major issues," said IAPMO CEO Dave Viola. "We applaud Rep. Tonko and other committee members for recognizing this need and including it in this important piece of legislation. This will have a direct, positive impact on America's homes and buildings today and for the foreseeable future."

Over the years, IAPMO and PMI have worked with Congress and NIST to address and prioritize research needs on plumbing. Rep. Tonko's amendment is based on legislation developed by Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-PA) and Sen. Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) who have both previously introduced legislation to expand NIST's efforts on drinking water. In May 2020, NIST published a report that identified nearly 60 specific research needs and challenges faced by the plumbing industry. This report provides a useful roadmap for addressing those needs through applied research and codes and standards activities.

Kerry Stackpole, PMI CEO, said that "American consumers have the benefit of state-of-the-art water efficient plumbing fittings and fixtures; however, the legacy plumbing that carries water to these fixtures in our homes and offices are based on research and data from the 1930s." Stackpole noted that "updated research and data by NIST in conjunction with academia, industry and other key stakeholders, would significantly improve the water efficiency and safety in water systems across the nation."

Another important issue that will be addressed by NIST research is the sizing of plumbing systems in buildings. Much has changed in the way Americans use water since the 1920s and '30s when Dr. Roy Hunter, working for the National Bureau of Standards, the predecessor to NIST, developed the method for predicting water use demands in a building and determining how large systems need to be to accommodate those demands. While minor updates have been made over the years to these methods, they are still used today in plumbing codes despite the many improvements and efficiencies made to plumbing fixtures, appliances and other water-using equipment in subsequent years. As a result, it is widely recognized that today's plumbing systems are often grossly oversized, resulting in increased building costs, wasted water and energy, and declining water quality. The research will seek to resolve this problem and lead to a method for determining plumbing system sizes that are more appropriate for the particular building.

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