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U.S. Congressman Introduces IAPMO Supported Plumbing Research Investment Legislation

Washington, D.C. (Dec. 5, 2016) — U.S. Rep. Matt Cartwright (D-Penn.) on Friday introduced legislation intended to promote federal investment in research to ensure the data used in the development of U.S. plumbing standards reflects the 21st century's more water efficient technologies. IAPMO, developer of the American National Standard-designated Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC®), is an enthusiastic advocate for this legislation and the updated data it would provide.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) Plumbing Research Act of 2016 (H.R. 6424) would direct the NIST to reconstitute its plumbing research laboratory, identifying mismatches between old data and newer, water-efficient products that undermine from an infrastructural standpoint the conservation such products are intended to provide. For many decades, NIST ran a plumbing laboratory, but due to budgetary constraints it was disbanded in the early 1980s.

"American consumers today reap the benefits of state-of-the-art water fixtures and appliances, such as water-saving shower heads and efficient washing machines," Rep. Cartwright said. "However, the plumbing that carries water to these fixtures and appliances has not kept pace. In fact, the research and data which are the basis for U.S. plumbing structure, design, and construction standards have barely changed since they were developed in the early 20th century. As a result, even newly built plumbing systems are often inefficient and inappropriate for current plumbing fixtures and appliances."

The proposed legislation furthermore addresses the health risks associated with potentially faulty data, including the threat of Legionella bacteria, which is responsible for Legionnaires' disease, and sewer backups that can result from inadequate water flow through pipes sized inadequately to sufficiently transport solids.

"It has been nearly 40 years since the federal government had a concerted and centralized effort providing research into our nation's plumbing systems," said Dain Hansen, IAPMO's Senior Vice President of Government Relations. "With water issues abounding, and only expected to increase in the future, this legislation aims to fill the gaping void in federal research to address the vital issues surrounding premise plumbing."

Founded in 1926, IAPMO's UPC governs the installation and maintenance of commercial and residential plumbing systems worldwide, its provisions protecting more than half the Earth's population. Its 2017 Water Efficiency and Sanitation Standard (WE♣Stand) draws upon IAPMO's core competency and industry expertise in plumbing systems for the purpose of providing comprehensive requirements to optimize water use practices attributed to the built environment while maintaining protection of the public health, safety and welfare.

A copy of the introduced bill can be found here: www.goo.gl/gUcWh6.

For more information on the legislation, contact Hansen at (202) 445-7514 or dain.hansen@iapmo.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.