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**IAPMO Renews Partnership in EPA MOU
on Decentralized Wastewater Treatment Systems**

Washington, D.C. (Nov. 15, 2017) — The International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) on Tuesday renewed its commitment to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and 18 partner organizations to continue their collaboration toward improving overall performance and management of decentralized wastewater treatment systems.

This MOU builds on the successes of previous MOUs signed in 2005, 2008, 2011, and 2014. IAPMO joined the partnership in 2014.

In 1997, the EPA concluded that decentralized systems are an integral component of our nation's wastewater infrastructure and can protect public health and water quality if they are properly planned, sited, designed, installed, and maintained. Since the first MOU signing in 2005, partners have worked together with great effectiveness to facilitate information exchange on system technology, collaborate to support training efforts, promote public awareness on septic system care and maintenance, and produce materials on decentralized systems.

Approximately one in five U.S. homes, and 16 percent of new housing units, are served by individual decentralized systems, per the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau's American Housing Survey (AHS). In most cases, these systems are a reliable means to help preserve water resources, protect public health, and support a community's economic health and vitality. Approximately half of existing systems, however, are more than 30 years old, per the AHS, and based on state data a substantial percentage is estimated to malfunction at any given time.

In response, renewal of the MOU seeks to:

- Strengthen external partnerships.
- Improve decentralized wastewater treatment system performance through improved practitioner competency, management practices, research and technology transfer.
- Improve accountability, control, and oversight through enhanced state, tribal and local program implementation.
- Improve local decision making through improved public awareness, education programs, and information materials.
- Support the principles outlined in the *Voluntary Management Guidelines and Management Handbook for Decentralized Systems* developed by the EPA's Office of Wastewater Management.
- Support homeowners in small or rural communities in meeting their infrastructure and development needs by providing outreach and education materials on decentralized technology.
- Improve homeowners understanding of the role decentralized systems play in protecting local water quality and public health.

"IAPMO is pleased to partner with EPA on this critical sanitation issue that impacts tens of millions of Americans," said Christopher Lindsay, IAPMO Director of Government Relations. "As a global leader in technical water and sanitation issues, IAPMO brings an important industry voice to this partnership, which promotes public awareness, standardization, and professionalism — ensuring that decentralized systems effectively meet the needs of our communities."

The MOU will remain in effect for three years.