

# Water Efficiency Research Coalition Formed

## IAPMO LEADS PLUMBING TRADE COLLEAGUES IN SIGNING MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING TO WORK TOGETHER

Story by Geoff Bilau

**I**n a formal ceremony Jan. 6 at the headquarters of the United States Environmental Protection Agency in Washington, D.C., representatives from the International Association of Plumbing and Mechanical Officials (IAPMO) and four other plumbing trade associations signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to form a Water Efficiency Research Coalition.

The coalition, conceived by The IAPMO Group, seeks “to provide a mechanism for voluntary cooperation on plumbing-related research projects that pertain to water efficiency,” according to the MoU. It initiates a spirit of cooperation between charter and future coalition members “to find common ground to share technical, scientific, legislative and regulatory information that will result in an organized and systematic approach towards the development of comprehensive research programs.” The goal of such research would be the advancement of water efficient and sustainable plumbing products, systems and practices.

Joining IAPMO in the coalition are: the Alliance for Water Efficiency (AWE); the International Code Council (ICC); the Plumbing-Heating-Cooling Contractors – National Association (PHCC); and the Plumbing Manufacturers Institute (PMI).

“We, like the other organizations represented here today, recognize that plumbing systems are complex,” said Pete DeMarco, IAPMO director of Special Programs. “To keep these systems working properly, decisions on further reductions in the amounts of water that we currently use today must be based on good science if we are to avoid problems that could tarnish and jeopardize the entire water efficiency movement.”

DeMarco explained that there comes a point when plumbing systems will fail due to lack of water in the system and that the research conducted by the coalition “will be structured to ensure that we do not unintentionally create performance problems as we seek to improve efficiency.”

EPA Administrator Stephen L. Johnson orchestrated the signing at the agency’s Pennsylvania Avenue offices, calling it an “historic day for water efficiency.” Johnson delivered the keynote address at last summer’s International Emerging Technologies Symposium, co-convened by IAPMO and the World Plumbing Council in Chicago. Also in attendance for the signing was EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Ben Grumbles. The EPA launched its own WaterSense program, promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs and practices, in 2006.

**The coalition, conceived by The IAPMO Group, seeks “to provide a mechanism for voluntary cooperation on plumbing-related research projects that pertain to water efficiency.”**



Left: Representing the various organizations involved at the signing ceremony were (from left to right): Carole Baker, AWE; Pete DeMarco, IAPMO; Sarah Yerkes, ICC; Allen Inlow, IAPMO; Mary Ann Dickinson, AWE; Jack Krecek, PMI; Stephen L. Johnson, EPA administrator; Kevin Tindall, PHCC; Ben Grumbles, EPA assistant administrator; Ike Casey, PHCC.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EPA

“We all need to thank IAPMO, not only for conceiving the idea, but for taking the initiative to move the idea forward,” said Mary Ann Dickinson, executive director of AWE. “By joining forces, we can collectively better use our resources to advance water efficiency research in areas where there is a common interest and need. AWE is pleased and excited to be the organization that will coordinate the coalition to make this important water efficiency research a reality.”

The non-binding MoU will be reviewed at least once a year in order to determine if it should be continued, modified or terminated. It was signed by: GP Russ Chaney, executive director of IAPMO; Dickinson, representing AWE; Jay Peters, executive director Plumbing, Mechanical and Fuel Gas for ICC; D.L. “Ike” Casey, executive vice president of PHCC; and Barbara C. Higgins, executive director of PMI.

“By pooling our resources, we believe we can generate a much better, more beneficial research program,” Chaney said. “Aligning industry efforts for the first time gets everybody pulling in the same direction; and that direction is the path to the most efficient, yet safe and healthy plumbing systems possible.”

Potential research topics include: Drainline Carry on High-Efficiency Toilets; Water Re-use Systems and Safe Applications for Re-use Water; Non-water Consuming



Urinals; and Sizing of Water-Efficient Plumbing Systems. The coalition will seek government grants and private party financing to fund this research.

Above: DeMarco explains IAPMO’s involvement in the coalition to Administrator Johnson.

PHOTO COURTESY OF EPA

“The plumbers are on the firing line when new technologies come to market,” PHCC’s Green Construction and Water Conservation Task Force Chairman Kevin Tindall, Tindall and Ranson Plumbing & Heating, Princeton, N.J., said at the signing ceremony. “It is in our best interest to make sure they are truly effective, because if they aren’t we will be the ones the customer calls. We are proud to support this important effort to conserve water and energy in our communities.”

PHCC contributed to this report.