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California Energy Commission
Docket No. 12-AAER-1
Docket Unit
1516 Ninth Street, MS-4
Sacramento, CA 95814-5512

California Energy Commission

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14-AAER-1

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RE: Draft Staff Report: Faucets, Toilets & Urinals

Dear Commission:

This letter comprises the comments of Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)¹ in response to the California Energy Commission's staff analysis of toilets, urinals and faucets for Appliance Efficiency Regulations. NEEP is a regional non-profit that works to accelerate energy efficiency (EE) in homes, buildings and industry across the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states. NEEP has worked with our partners to support the adoption of state and federal appliance efficiency standards for more than a decade through the Northeast Appliance Efficiency Standards Project.

We commend the Energy Commission for responding to the urgency of both California and national water scarcity by prioritizing updates to Title 20 standards for toilets, urinals, and faucets. States across the nation are facing water resource constraints and other challenges to their water infrastructure. Moreover, a significant body of research shows that energy use to treat and transport water and wastewater for our homes and businesses is substantial, amounting to almost 4 percent of national electricity use, and almost 20 percent of California's electricity use.²

While we commend the Energy Commission for taking on this challenging issue, the standards the Commission has recommended in the Draft Staff Report should be strengthened to ensure strong path forward for water efficiency for our nation. As the Commission is aware, the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions regularly look to California's lead on appliance efficiency standards. Since 2004, nine states in these regions have adopted state-level efficiency standards, largely supported by the California rulemaking process.³ This rulemaking is no different, as two states in our region, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, are currently considering legislation that would create standards for toilets, urinals and faucets, and we expect more to do so in the near future.⁴

¹ These comments are offered by NEEP staff and do not necessarily represent the view of the NEEP Board of Directors, sponsors or partners.

² Senator Lisa Murkoswki, "Energy and Water Nexus White Paper," May 2014, p. 15, http://www.energy.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/files/serve?File_id=9d529812-659b-43a1-a2d1-ef0e67894636. Also, <http://www.energy.ca.gov/research/iaw/water.html>.

³ See. Appliance Standards Awareness Project, "Energy and Water Efficiency Standards Adopted and Pending by State," http://www.appliance-standards.org/sites/default/files/State_status_grid_Feb_21_2014.pdf.

⁴ See Massachusetts H.3950 at <https://malegislature.gov/Bills/188/House/H3950>. See Rhode Island 7799 at <http://webserver.rilin.state.ri.us/BillText14/HouseText14/H7799.pdf>



The CEC's proposed standards will not achieve additional water savings, except for faucets beyond those already required by law. However, more stringent efficiency standards for all products in all categories (including faucets) are cost-effective and available in the market today.

For example, 49 percent of the aerators in the Department of Energy's Appliance Efficiency Database are designed to use 1 gallon per minute (gpm) or less at 60 pounds per square inch. Setting the maximum flow rate at 1 gpm would increase the total water savings by 500 percent relative to the Commission's proposed efficiency level of 1.5 gpm. The Commission should not be held back by the existence of the WaterSense specifications. Voluntary programs (i.e. ENERGY STAR for appliances) occasionally fail to update their specifications on a timely basis allowing a market to become overwhelmingly qualified. The purpose of such specifications is not to identify the top performing products in a particular category. There is precedent at the federal level to establish new energy efficiency standards that exceed voluntary energy efficiency specifications (ENERGY STAR). This does not harm the ENERGY STAR brand as they simply establish a new specification. The CEC should not allow a program that has not kept up with the market to prevent it from moving towards standards levels that secure cost effective water and energy savings. In addition, water utilities currently promoting the WaterSense label would have to adjust their programs regardless of whether the state standard moved to those levels or beyond.

We also recommend that you adopt 0.125 gallon per flush (gpf) standard for urinals and a 1.28 gpf maximum flush volume for dual flush toilets. Jointly these measures will save nearly 3 billion gallons of water and 30 GWh of embedded electricity per year compared to the CEC proposal.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback regarding this important matter regarding the future of efficiency standards for these water products, and thank you for consideration of our comments.

Sincerely,

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Northeast Energy Efficiency Partnerships (NEEP)