

## EPA WaterSense Initiative

This email will be quick and short, and I will follow this up with some more details in a few days. But, I wanted to get some info out to you quickly tonight about the EPA's WaterSense program. Because TOMORROW is the deadline to sign up for a Webinar to learn more and possibly comment about the WaterSense Program. I just finished a conference call about the program today, and in the coming days, I'll be posting some more info about the program and how you can contact the EPA. Let me explain why you should be interested.

### **Very Quick Overview:**

The EPA is creating their WaterSense Program....from their Website you can read these paragraphs;

*“WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by EPA, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting water efficiency and enhancing the market for water-efficient products, programs, and practices.*

*WaterSense will help consumers identify water-efficient products and programs. The WaterSense label will indicate that these products and programs meet water efficiency and performance criteria. WaterSense labeled products will perform well, help save money, and encourage innovation in manufacturing.”*

Which sounds great. A voluntary program that is designed to conserve and protect our nations water supply. However, the current verbiage in their proposal states the following: (Directly from the proposal)

*WaterSense labeled new homes; builders shall choose and implement one of these options. Option 1 provides a turfgrass allowance and Option 2 allows the builder/landscape professional to design a landscape that is sustainable with a specified amount of water (i.e., a water budget).*

#### *4.1.1 Landscape design*

*4.1.1.1 Option 1 – Turfgrass shall not exceed 40 percent of the landscapable area.*

*4.1.1.2 Option 2 – Landscape design shall be developed using the water budget tool based on a 70 percent evapotranspiration adjustment factor.*

*4.1.2 Turfgrass – Turfgrass shall not be installed in strips less than 4 feet wide.*

*4.1.3 Slopes – Plantings other than turfgrass shall be installed on slopes in excess of 4 feet of horizontal run per 1 foot vertical rise (4:1).*

Two things should JUMP right off the page at you, "*Turfgrass shall not exceed 40 percent of the landscapable area,*" and "*Plantings other than turfgrass shall be installed on slopes.*" There are plenty of other shocking requirements in the program, but these two are really stunning. No more 40% ??!!! No grass on slopes = EROSION????!!

You can read the WHOLE specification here; [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home\\_rev-draftspec508.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home_rev-draftspec508.pdf)

To make you feel better the EPA will tell you that this is just a "VOLUNTARY" program and that it is not meant to be enforceable or binding. But we have already heard of several municipalities, townships, home-owner's associations, and cities who are considering mandating this program.

### **WEBINAR Info and EPA Comment Period**

Like I said above, I will be sending you another email soon and I'm sure you will be getting an email from your local and possibly national turf associations about this program and what role you can play in changing this program. I will be sending out some talking points, key facts, and SCIENCE BASED INFORMATION (which this proposal is sorely lacking).

But I wanted you to be aware that there is a EPA Webinar on this program on June 22, 2009...but the deadline to sign up is tomorrow. (Sorry I just found out about it.) The other important date I will discuss more in my next email is July 7. July 7 is the last day for the EPA to accept comments about the program. But like I said, I'll explain more about submitting comments to the EPA in my next email. You can learn more and sign up at <http://www.epa.gov/watersense/register.htm>

and again the whole draft is located at [http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home\\_rev-draftspec508.pdf](http://www.epa.gov/watersense/docs/home_rev-draftspec508.pdf)

Not everybody has to sign up for the Webinar, but soon I hope you all will send your thoughts and comments to the EPA about this program.

Thank you and I'll be in touch soon.  
Rodney