

NATIONAL TURFGRASS FEDERATION

Advancing Turfgrass Science for Society

28 September 2018

Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Environment & Public Works Committee
United States Senate
410 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
Environment & Public Works Committee
United States Senate
456 Dirksen Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

The National Turfgrass Federation (NTF), a non-profit organization which coordinates turfgrass research within the federal government and private industry, seeks your support for S. 3021, *America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018*, an omnibus measure covering water infrastructure and related items. Our specific interest covers a provision called WaterSense, which we hope will be authorized into law. WaterSense is a voluntary rating system promoting efficient water use — in effect an “Energy Star for water.” Managed by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), WaterSense incentives and practices saved states and localities an estimated 631 billion gallons of water use in 2017.

Given ongoing research with turf varieties that are drought tolerant and require less water use, NTF believes WaterSense will help increase conservation practices and save money for home owners, commercial enterprises, and the public sector. No funds for WaterSense are requested in this conference bill. Instead, basic authorization language providing a “*Sense of Congress*” that EPA continue managing this program under its existing budget.

Among turf research initiatives relating to WaterSense, there is Bermuda Grass breeding at Oklahoma State University, fertilizer reduction use and runoff protection at the University of Maryland, and a new turf scientist at the University of Delaware working on drought tolerant varieties. At institutions such as North Carolina State University, there is a comprehensive program covering multiple aspects of turf management, including weed control, genetics, soil fertility, and water use management. These research initiatives promote resource conservation and environmental stewardship — two WaterSense priorities.

NTF hopes passage of this bill will take place before adjournment of the 115th Session. S. 3021 comprises bipartisan water resource components derived from other legislation, and is crucial for upgrading our infrastructure. Should you need additional analysis or information on WaterSense benefits, NTF will be glad to put turf researchers in touch with you or your staff.

Sincerely,



Kevin Morris
NTF Executive Director
Beltsville, Maryland