Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor

Dee Freeman, Secretary

N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources

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Fix A Leak Week Set for March 15-21

RALEIGH – The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources is partnering with EPA's WaterSense program to promote "Fix a Leak Week" March 15-21, to remind people to check their household plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks. Minor leaks account for more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes.

WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA to protect the future of our nation's water supply by promoting and enhancing the use of water-efficient products and services. The WaterSense label makes it easy for consumers to recognize products and programs that save water without sacrificing performance or quality.

"Leaks can add up to more than 10,000 gallons of water wasted at home every year—that's enough to fill a backyard swimming pool," said DENR Secretary Dee Freeman. "North Carolina is participating in Fix a Leak Week to help homeowners find ways to save money on their utility bills and to help save water in our community and for future generations."

As a result of increasing water supply demand and the limited quantity of available treatable raw water, the state's public water supply systems are implementing water efficiency programs. For links to a few examples of North Carolina local governments' water efficiency programs, visit: http://savewaternc.org/CitiesHome.asp. Contact your local water supply system operator for more information about water efficiency in your area and possible incentive or rebate programs available.

Common types of leaks found in the home include leaking toilet flappers, dripping faucets and other leaking valves. In most cases, fixture replacement parts don't require a major investment and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers. Following are a few water-saving tips:

- Check for leaks by turning off all the taps in your house and then look at your water meter. If it is still turning, chances are you have a leak somewhere. Instructions on how to read your water meter can be found at: http://savewaternc.org/ReadMeter.asp.
- Reduce faucet leaks by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and, if necessary, replace the faucet with a WaterSense labeled model.
- Place five drops of food coloring into the tank of the toilet and wait 15-20 minutes. Do not flush the toilet during this test. After 15-20 minutes, look into the bowl of the toilet. If the color starts to develop in the bowl, there is a leak in the toilet and it must be repaired. Usually, installing a new flapper will correct the leak. For more information about detecting and repairing leaks in your home, visit North Carolina's water efficiency Web site at: http://savewaternc.org/FindRepairLeaks.asp.

Currently, there are more than 400 WaterSense-labeled toilets, more than 1,600 labeled faucets and faucet accessories, and more than 850 certified irrigation partners. WaterSense-labeled products must achieve independent, third-party testing and certification to prove they meet EPA's rigorous criteria for efficiency and performance. Watersense labeled products can be found at home improvement stores and usually cost the same as less efficient models.

For more information on Fix a Leak Week, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak. For more information about North Carolina's water efficiency efforts, visit http://savewaternc.org/index.asp.

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