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CARDIN CHAIRS HEARING ON PROMOTING WATER-USE EFFICIENCY AND CONSERVATION

WASHINGTON, DC – **U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), chairman of the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee of the Senate Committee on the Environment and Public Works, chaired a hearing today on the need for water conservation and the role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in promoting water use efficiency.

“More and more Americans understand that we must move, as a nation, toward greater energy efficiency and renewable technologies. Most of us don’t know that how we use and distribute clean water is intricately tied to our energy consumption, economy, and overall resources,” said Chairman Cardin. **“Unfortunately, too many of us only think about how we use water during a drought, but many of our communities will face water shortages in the near future. With better investment in research and development, with public education, and with better incentives to use water-efficient technologies we can begin to change public perception and positively change the way we use water. But we have got to move aggressively and with a greater sense of urgency.”**

In the last five years, nearly every region of the country has experienced water shortages. By 2013, at least 36 states are anticipating local, regional, or statewide water shortages, even under non-drought conditions. Maryland is one of those states anticipating water shortages under non-drought conditions. Population growth and changing growth patterns are placing increased pressure on water resources across all regions of the state from the Eastern Shore to the western-most counties.

The EPA has a statutory responsibility under the *Clean Water Act* and the *Safe Drinking Act* to assess and protect the nation’s water supply. While the agency has funding for research and development of water treatment technologies, health effects of water pollutants, security from deliberate contamination, and watershed protection, there is no funding specifically to address water supply, efficiency and conservation. EPA’s recently created WaterSense program fills part of this void. WaterSense is a partnership program sponsored by EPA that promotes water-use efficiency and works to enhance the market for water-efficient products, programs, and practices.

“Like the EnergyStar label, which has near universal recognition across the nation as a sign of energy efficiency, WaterSense has the potential to change the way Americans look at the products they use each and every day. WaterSense seeks to help consumers identify water-efficient products and programs that achieve at least 20% water-use reduction over similar products or services,” said Chairman Cardin. **“The EPA estimates that if all U.S. households installed water-efficient appliances, the country would save more than 3 trillion gallons of water and more than \$17 billion dollars per year.”**

Participants in today's subcommittee hearing included: **Michael H. Shapiro**, Acting Assistant Administrator, Office of Water, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency; **Martha Davis**, Executive Manager for Policy Development, Inland Empire Utilities Agency (IEUA); **Mary Ann Dickinson**, Executive Director, Alliance for Water Efficiency; **Mark A. Shannon**, Ph.D., Director, Center of Advanced Materials for the Purification of Water with Systems (WaterCAMPWS), University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign; and **G. Tracy Mehan III**, Principal, The Cadmus Group, and former Assistant Administrator for Water at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, 2001-2003.

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