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**USDA Amends Rule Making Well Systems
with Water Treatment Devices Eligible for Grant Program**

Washington, D.C. (April 27, 2020) — The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has published new guidance that allows for the installation of water treatment devices in the agency's Household Well Systems Grant Program. IAPMO and its members applaud this update, which will help protect the water quality of a great number of households across the United States, yet another recognition by the federal government of the important, life-improving role that water treatment devices play in areas impacted by contaminated groundwater.

IAPMO has been proud to join with industry partners in advocating for increased funding for USDA programs that increase access to clean water and safe sanitation. It has also advocated for the greater inclusion of water filtration devices in these programs.

The guidance may be viewed in its entirety here: www.federalregister.gov/d/2020-08034

Households impacted by contaminated groundwater that desperately require water treatment devices to supply the home with a potable source may now apply for the Household Wells Systems grant, with or without the installation of a new water well system.

The change could benefit countless American families; although the United States has one of the safest drinking water supplies in the world, more than 47 million people living here rely on a private well to supply it. These sources can still become contaminated though naturally occurring chemicals and minerals (i.e. arsenic, radon), local land use practices (i.e. pesticides, chemicals, animal feeding operations), malfunctioning wastewater treatment systems and other sources. Contamination of a private well can impact not only the household served by the well, but also nearby households using the same aquifer.

"IAPMO has long been very supportive of USDA's efforts to expand access to water and sanitation," said Tom Palkon, IAPMO Executive Vice President of Water Systems. "We have been proud to work with industry partners to support the inclusion of water treatment devices across USDA's rural development portfolio."

A 2018 study found that 42 percent of private wells in southwestern Wisconsin had unsafe contamination levels. An earlier statewide study published by the Journal of Environmental Health found that nearly half of private wells tested statewide contained water deemed unsafe to drink, containing high levels of iron, bacteria, nitrates, and other heavy metals or chemicals. Researchers from Penn State Extension and Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, or Virginia Tech, tested private well systems in their states and found that 12 percent of wells in Pennsylvania and 19 percent in Virginia had lead levels exceeding the maximum EPA threshold for public water systems.

The IAPMO Group supports the drinking water systems industry by providing accredited and highly technical product certification services to a host of applicable standards.

For more information, direct your web browser to <https://www.iapmorg.org/certification-services/drinking-water-systems-certification/>.

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