

Study Shows New Homes in California Use Less Water than Existing Homes

ConSol releases California's Codes and Standards, Residential Indoor Water Use update

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SACRAMENTO – According to a new study released today by the California Homebuilding Foundation, new homes built to current building codes use far less water than homes built 20 years ago, and addressing water use of existing homes by retrofitting fixtures and appliances are a very cost-effective way of reducing water use for California.

The study, California's Residential Indoor Water Use, was funded through a grant from the California Homebuilding Foundation and prepared by Stockton-based ConSol, a nationally recognized consultant on energy efficiency and green building solutions for single-family and multifamily builders since 1983.

The study examines historical fixture flow rates and appliance standards required by code from 1975 to 2013. Current new homes use 50% less indoor water than typical existing homes due to the incorporation of low-fixtures and appliance requirement for new homes.

There are over 7.5 million single-family homes in existence prior to CALGreen being implemented in 2010. Of these single-family homes, more than half were built before the first water-conserving plumbing standards were put into effect in 1980.

Water conservation efforts in these older homes can be achieved by retrofitting faucets and fixtures with low-flow faucets, showerheads and toilets, as well as installation of on-demand recirculation systems, at an approximate cost of \$1,500.

“With significant water savings and minimal costs, upgrading existing housing represents an extremely cost-effective way of conserving public water supplies,” states ConSol's President Mike Hodgson.

The report concluded that if all existing homes were retrofitted to CALGreen water standards, California could save 300 billion gallons of water annually, or the equivalent of 8.7% of California's total reservoir capacity. Given that new construction only accounts for 1% of the current California housing stock, existing housing stock water use must be addressed if California is to achieve substantial water savings.

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To download a copy of the full report, please visit the CHF website:

<http://www.myCHF.org/go/research/research-projects-pdfs/>

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About the California Homebuilding Foundation

The California Homebuilding Foundation (CHF) invests in the future of the homebuilding through: Endowments that provide scholarships and fund industry research; publishing current construction and new home statistics; presenting training seminars; and supporting high school courses that encourage young people to choose careers in the industry. The Foundation also hosts California's top industry award, Hall of Fame. <http://www.myCHF.org/>

About ConSol

ConSol has been providing energy efficiency and green building solutions for builders, government agencies, utilities trade associations and developers since 1983. ConSol offers leading-edge research and energy consulting in systems, technologies and codes to improve sustainability of new and existing residential and commercial buildings and developments. <http://www.consol.ws/index.php>