



For Immediate Release



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Columbia, S.C., March 15, 2010 –

**Public Service Commission of South Carolina and the
Office of Regulatory Staff Promote EPA's Fix-a-Leak Week March 15-21**

The Public Service Commission of South Carolina (PSC) and the Office of Regulatory Staff (ORS) are teaming up to promote *Fix-a-Leak Week* March 15 through 21, 2010. Sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) WaterSense® program, *Fix-a-Leak Week* is an annual reminder to Americans to check household plumbing fixtures and irrigation systems for leaks.

According to the EPA, minor water leaks account for more than 1 trillion gallons of water wasted each year in U.S. homes. In South Carolina alone, average water usage per day was recorded at over 7 million gallons just a few years ago (U.S. Geological Survey 2005). However, simple and inexpensive water-saving measures can dramatically decrease water consumption and waste. According to the American Water Works Association, installation of water-saving features in all U.S. households would result in a savings of 5.4 billion gallons of water per day and approximately \$4 billion per year. (For more information, visit <http://www.drinktap.org/>.)

The PSC and the ORS are promoting *Fix-a-Leak Week* to help consumers in South Carolina save money on their utility bills and to help conserve water in our communities for future generations. According to ORS Executive Director Dukes Scott, "A clean and abundant supply of water is a commodity that must not be taken for granted. By promoting *Fix-a-Leak Week*, we hope to raise consumer awareness of the simple steps that can be taken to result in significant savings in water consumption."

Specifically, the PSC, ORS, and WaterSense are promoting ways to identify and repair dripping faucets, running toilets, and leaky showerheads. In most cases, fixture-replacement parts pay for themselves quickly and can be installed by do-it-yourselfers, your favorite

handy person, plumber, or WaterSense irrigation partner. Following are a few water-saving tips:

- Reduce faucet leaks by checking faucet washers and gaskets for wear and, if necessary, replace the faucet with a WaterSense-labeled model.
- Leaky toilets are most often the result of a worn toilet flapper. Replacing the rubber flapper is a quick fix that could save a home with a constantly running toilet up to 200 gallons of water per day.
- For a leaky garden hose, replace the nylon or rubber hose washer and ensure a tight connection to the spigot using pipe tape and a wrench.
- Landscape irrigation systems should be checked each spring before use to make sure they are not damaged by frost or freezing.

If homeowners have to replace a plumbing fixture, the PSC and the ORS remind them to look for the WaterSense label. WaterSense-labeled toilets, faucets, and (in the near future) showerheads have been independently tested and certified to save water and perform as well as or better than standard models. WaterSense also partners with certified landscape irrigation auditors, designers, installers, and maintenance professionals. Visit www.epa.gov/watersense to find a WaterSense-labeled product or an irrigation partner in your area.

For more information on *Fix-a-Leak Week*, visit www.epa.gov/watersense/fixaleak.

The Public Service Commission serves the public by providing fair, open, and effective regulation of the state's public utilities, through the faithful administration of the law and the regulatory process. For more information, please visit the PSC web site at <http://www.psc.sc.gov/>.

The Office of Regulatory Staff is an agency of the State of South Carolina. Its mission is to represent the public interest in utility regulation by balancing the concerns of the using and consuming public, the financial integrity of public utilities, and the economic development of South Carolina. For more information, please visit the ORS web site at <http://www.regulatorystaff.sc.gov/>.

WaterSense, a partnership program sponsored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, seeks to protect the future of our nation's water supply by offering people a simple way to use less water. For more information on WaterSense, and for a full list of labeled products and WaterSense irrigation and builder partners, visit www.epa.gov/watersense.

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