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CONTACT: Jen Mueller, jmueller@fwwatch.org, (202) 683-2467

WEBSITE EMPOWERS CONSUMERS TO LIVE WATER-WISE

America's waterscape is changing. Climate shifts and population increases are putting pressure on our fresh water sources, leading to record-setting droughts and unprecedented water shortages. As we look for answers to this daunting problem, a new website called H2O Conserve (www.h2oconserve.org) is coming online to show us the way.

Created by a group of public interest organizations committed to water conservation, this new website serves as a one-stop shop where Americans can go for tips and information to help make water conservation part of our everyday lives. Step one? Acknowledging how much water we *really* use.

We all know that taking shorter showers and watering our lawns less can help us cut back our water use, but water doesn't only go down the drain when we turn on the tap. Every aspect of our lives is connected to water, and Americans use enormous amounts of it to make everything from electricity to foods to household products. For example, it takes 24 gallons of water to make a single pound of plastic, and over a hundred gallons to make a pound of cotton. Even the electricity we use is tied to water – with power plants consuming 40 percent of our nation's fresh water resources.

The website's H₂O Calculator takes all this into account, and after you answer a few questions it reveals just how much water your lifestyle requires. How much do you think you use? Well, the average American guzzles an astonishing 1,189.3 gallons per *day* according to the calculator's measure – not just a drop in the bucket!

"By allowing visitors to calculate their "*water footprint*" - including the water they use at home, the water used to produce their food, energy and household products, we hope to get people thinking about water in a whole new way," says Wenonah Hauter, Executive Director of Food & Water Watch. "This great educational tool incorporates actions people can take with broad informational resources on issues such as water pollution, our water infrastructure and bottled water."

After using the calculator, visitors are invited to learn more about our water system and important water issues. It also provides tips for saving water at home – a valuable resource given the recent water shortages and droughts that many Americans are facing these days.

The site's creators include Food & Water Watch, the Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility, GRACE and Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. In the words of Dr. Robert S. Lawrence, Director of the Center for a Livable Future, "H₂O Conserve provides practical information and tools for the average American to understand and act to conserve water."

Food & Water Watch - Food & Water Watch is committed to creating an economically and environmentally viable future, by working with grassroots organizations and other allies around the world to stop the corporate control of our food and water. www.foodandwaterwatch.org

GRACE - GRACE works with research, policy, consumer and grassroots communities to raise public awareness and advance innovative solutions for creating an economically and environmentally viable future. www.gracelinks.org

Center for a Livable Future - The Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future promotes research and develops and communicates information about the complex interrelationships among water, diet, food production, environment and human health while advancing an ecological perspective in reducing threats to the health of the public and promotes policies that protect health, the global environment and the ability to sustain life for future generations. www.jhsph.edu/clf

Interfaith Center on Corporate Responsibility - ICCR is a membership organization of over 275 faith-based organizations and communities that has been a leader of the corporate responsibility movement for over 35 years. ICCR members use their investment clout to engage corporate management on social and environmental issues such as global warming, genetically modified foods, water, and environmental justice. www.iccr.org

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