**Q & A about the Water Quality Association’s Sustainability Certification Program (2/13)**

**What is the WQA Sustainability Certification Program?**

To respond to the needs of our members and the marketplace, WQA has launched a Sustainability Certification Program (Eco-labeling) for products that contact or treat drinking water. The program includes development of a series of standards (first of their kind in the Water Industry) to codify basic principles of Sustainability and Corporate Social Responsibility into a certification framework that can be utilized by manufacturers, retailers and consumers to substantiate and legitimize the various environmental claims being made across the industry. Manufacturers that obtain this certification will display the new WQA Sustainability Certification Mark on their products. The goal is to provide guidance to, and drive improvement among companies interested in pursuing a more sustainable approach to their operations and products. A key factor in the success of this strategy will be acceptance and adoption of the Mark by municipal, regulatory and retail stakeholders, in order to encourage participation in this program by the product manufacturers.

**How are the Standards structured?**

This series of product standards will be delineated by product category. Each of these standards carries a requirement for certification to a prerequisite Management Standard. All the standards operate on a “points-based” system, wherein manufacturers are free to choose, from a menu of sustainability advancing criteria, as to which initiatives they can implement that are best suited to their needs and which will have the greatest environmental impact relative to the effort required. Points are weighted and awarded for each criterion, and certification is granted by achieving defined minimum scores overall, and within certain subsections.

**Does the certification apply to the enterprise level, the facility level, or to individual products?**

The certification applies exclusively to individual products. So products are the only entities that may attain certification WQA Sustainability Certification and display the WQA Sustainability Mark, although evaluation for certification occurs at the facility level for both the Management and Product Standards.

**What Standards/Product Categories will be available for Certification?**

* WQA S-801: Sustainable Management Standard
	+ This standard not available for certification, but is a prerequisite to all product standards
* WQA S-802: Activated Carbon
* WQA S-803: Point of Use Water Filtration Products that Utilize Activated Carbon
	+ Includes criteria to encourage sourcing of *Certified* Activated Carbon
	+ Excludes RO and UV devices (see below)

**When will the Program go live?**

Pilot testing of the new standards is nearing completion. We anticipate issuing the standards and launching this program in April, 2013 for S-801/S-803, with S-802 to follow within another few months. Contact: Stuart Mann, CWS-VI, Sustainability Certification Supervisor (SMann@WQA.org or 630-929-2546).

**What are some of the future objectives/plans for the Program?**

Efforts are already underway to identify and add additional product categories to the above list of standards. Currently under consideration for "phase 2” are Reverse Osmosis (RO), Ultraviolet (UV), Softeners/Ion Exchange Media, with additional product categories such as End Point devices, POE systems, Distillers, Ozone, Plumbing products and Chemical additives also on the radar for future consideration. In addition, WQA is considering offering ISO 14001 certification for facilities under the umbrella of this program.

**How can I participate in this effort?**

WQA is actively recruiting members from the municipal, regulatory and retail stakeholder community to serve on the Sustainability Certification Task Force, various ad-hoc workgroups for individual product categories, as well as our Sustainability Review Board (SRB) which will oversee this new program. Please contact Eric Yeggy, CWS-VI, Business Development Manager (EYeggy@WQA.org or 630-929-2539) if you would like to discuss participation in this ongoing initiative.