



## HOSTELLING INTERNATIONAL USA ANNOUNCES MILLION GALLON CHALLENGE IN HONOR OF WORLD WATER DAY

*In Advance of World Water Day on March 22, Hostel Network Uses Grant from Booking.com for Water Saving SmartShowers*



*New Hydrao SmartShower head and Shower tracker.*

Washington, DC - March 21, 2019 – In honor of World Water Day on March 22, Hostelling International USA (HI USA), a national nonprofit with more than 50 hostels nationwide, has announced “The Million Gallon Challenge,” enlisting guests to help them save a million gallons of water over the next year. HI USA was awarded a \$250,000 grant by Booking.com to install Hydrao SmartShowers in all its owned and/or operated hostels. The new SmartShower is the first of its kind and uses colored lights to provide visual cues on shower duration. HI USA is asking all guests to cut thirty seconds off their showers.

HI USA hosts more than 1.15 million overnights nationwide annually. If each guest cuts just 30 seconds off their shower, the impact is significant. Each thirty seconds translates into one gallon of water, so over a year, they can save more than a million gallons of water.

“At HI USA we believe personal experiences create the highest impact, both now and in the future,” said Russ Hedge, HI USA CEO. “Through this initiative, guests receive real time feedback on their showering routine and are empowered to reduce their water consumption in a fun, meaningful way. This endeavor is designed to create a behavior change at the hostel and back home.”

HI USA San Francisco City Center and HI Santa Monica will be the first two hostels to receive the SmartShowers, which will be installed and available to guests by World Water Day on March 22. The remaining U.S. hostels will receive the new showerheads in the coming months, for a total of 750 SmartShowers.

The SmartShowers are part of a broader focus on sustainability for HI USA. In 2015, HI USA began purchasing renewable energy credits equivalent to 100% of its electricity consumption, or 7,400,000 kwh annually. As a result, the organization became a member of the US EPA's Green Power Leadership club. Twenty-one of HI USA's hostels are Green Globe certified, the first hostels in the world to achieve this mark. Award-winning programs such as "Pack your Impact" engage the travel community in sustainability.

"We are committed to reducing the carbon footprint in the communities we service," said Hedge. "Our new SmartShowers are just one tool we're employing and we'll continue to look for ways to make our hostels more sustainable and efficient."

"We're excited for Hostelling International USA to kick off this innovative initiative and are looking forward to seeing the measurable impact and immediate benefits it can offer to each local community," says Marianne Gybels, who leads CSR globally for Booking.com. "What really impressed us about this project is its universal scalability and its potential to create a long-lasting behavioral change beyond just one trip, inspiring travelers to adjust their daily routine at home as well."

For more information about the Million Gallon Challenge and HI USA's sustainable efforts and achievements, visit [www.hiusa.org/million](http://www.hiusa.org/million). Follow us @HIUSA on Instagram and Twitter or @HostellingInternationalUSA on Facebook, #milliongallonchallenge.

**About HI USA:**

Hostelling International USA (HI USA) is a nonprofit, member organization founded on an enduring belief in the power of travel to foster a deeper understanding of people, places, and the world around. HI USA promotes a dynamic community of global citizens who have the wisdom and humanity to actively make the world a better place. As the nation's leading hostel brand, HI USA hosts more than 1 million overnights annually across more than 50 hostels, with guests from more than 100 countries. For over 80 years, HI USA has provided a network of affordable hostels in converted mansions, reinvented lighthouses, and historic urban buildings all across the country. Visit [www.hiusa.org](http://www.hiusa.org) for more information.

###

**Media Contact:** Gabby McNamara (908) 461-5260; [gabbymac@verizon.net](mailto:gabbymac@verizon.net)