

WATER FOR OUR HEALTH, ECONOMY, ENVIRONMENT AND QUALITY OF LIFE



**WATERREUSE**

ACTION AGENDA 2017 - 2021



# WATEREUSE ACTION AGENDA FOR 2017-2021

## ► THINK BIG PICTURE

### ▼ *ACTION 1: Develop a national vision and strategy for water.*

Many factors contribute to a robust economy – a transportation system that can efficiently transport goods to market, a high quality education system that produces a skilled workforce that attracts investment, and a sustainable supply of water to meet the needs of people, businesses and the environment. While national leaders routinely debate the policies governing transportation and education, there is little national discussion about the policies surrounding water supply.

While local governments are clearly responsible for building and maintaining water infrastructure, the President and Congress can align laws, regulation and funding to help communities develop and provide safe, reliable, locally-controlled water supplies, which is essential to job creation.

Establishing a national vision and strategy for water will provide the framework for comprehensive, long-term planning for water infrastructure on the federal, state and local level.

DID YOU KNOW?



# 46%

The percentage of water used to produce products Americans buy every day.

## ► SUPPORT SCIENCE

### ▼ *ACTION 2: Support the science needed to safely increase water supplies.*

The Water Environment Research Foundation and the WaterReuse Research Foundation recently merged to form the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation. The merger created a robust and well-rounded portfolio of research in water, wastewater and stormwater, valued at more than \$200 million.

Since it was established in 1989, the Water Environment Research Foundation has been internationally-recognized as a leader in research related to wastewater and stormwater. Established just four years later in 1993, the WaterReuse Research Foundation has led the world in producing applied research in water reuse. The new Water Environment & Reuse Foundation will continue to focus on research in resource recovery and reuse, which provides the science for next generation technology and innovation to meet the growing demand for clean water.

Providing \$25 million in annual, recurring funding to the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation for research in water reuse and resource recovery will ensure the science is available to increase water reuse.

## ▶ INVEST IN INFRASTRUCTURE

### ▼ Action 3: Leverage federal funding to increase investment in water infrastructure.

The U.S. invests more than \$2 billion annually to build, repair and improve water infrastructure to meet growing demand and protect the environment. That investment generates \$12 billion in total investment.

Established in 1992, Title XVI is the only federal program that provides funding specifically for water reuse projects. The program has leveraged approximately \$639 million in federal funding to generate an additional \$2.4 billion in state and local funding.

Established in 1987, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund provides low-interest loans to improve drinking water treatment, fix leaking or old pipes, improve the source of water supply, replace or construct finished water storage tanks, and other water infrastructure projects to protect public health including all forms of water reuse.

Budget Year	Title XVI (in millions)	Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (in millions)	Clean Water State Revolving Fund (in billions)
2013	\$20	\$861	\$1.30
2014	\$21.5	\$907	\$1.4
2015	\$21.5	\$907	\$1.448
2016	\$23	\$863	\$1.393
2017**	\$50	\$1,186	\$1.145

Established in 1997, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund provides low-interest loans to communities for the construction of municipal wastewater facilities, stormwater management projects, and other water quality projects including all forms of water reuse.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency distributes annual funding to the states who contribute an additional 20% of total funding. The states provide low-interest loans to public and investor-owned utilities. Loan repayments returned to the fund are then available to support new projects. States also have the option of leveraging federal dollars further by issuing revenue bonds to provide additional resources to fund projects.

The amount of money generated by \$1 invested in building or improving infrastructure.

# \$6



DID YOU KNOW?

▼ **ACTION 4: Provide financing options for water infrastructure projects.**

The 2014 Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) provides tax-free municipal bonds and low-interest loans for up to 49% of the cost of construction for water, wastewater, stormwater and water reuse projects. Although the program was created two years ago, only minimal funding has been provided to establish the internal framework to manage the program.

The program is modeled after the successful Transportation Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (TIFIA) which provides loans, loan guarantees and standby lines of credit to pay for surface transportation projects such as highways, transit, railroad, intermodal freight and post access.

Fully funding the loan program can help advance large-scale, qualified projects that otherwise might be delayed or deferred because of size, complexity or uncertainty in future funding.

▼ **ACTION 5: Incentivize private investment in water reuse.**

Approximately 45% of drinking water supplies are consumed by industrial facilities, such as manufacturers, mining operations and power plants. Although many facilities may be able to reuse water, the cost of retrofitting existing facilities is often prohibitively expensive.

Establishing an investment tax credit – a dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal income taxes – for capital improvements to retrofit facilities will create an incentive for companies to recycle water, which will reduce the demand on drinking water supplies.

The Solar Investment Tax Credit, which provides a 30% tax credit for solar systems on residential and commercial properties, provides a model for the water reuse investment tax incentive. Since its implementation in 2006, annual solar installation has grown by more than 1600%, moving millions of homes and businesses off the power grid.

New legislation could be modeled on the *Energy Efficiency Tax Incentives Act (S.2189)*, which created a new investment tax credit for water reuse, recycling, and efficiency measures related to process, sanitary, and cooling water.

**DID YOU KNOW?**



**1/5<sup>TH</sup>**

The portion of the U.S. economy that would grind to a halt without a reliable and clean source of water

## ► MODERNIZE FEDERAL PROGRAMS

### ▼ *ACTION 6: Transform Title XVI into a competitive grant program.*

The Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, more commonly referred to as Title XVI (Public Law 102-575), is the only federal program that provides funding specifically for water reuse projects in 17 western states and Hawaii.

Since the program was enacted, 53 projects have been authorized, 20 projects have been completed and 37 projects have completed feasibility reports. In 2014 alone, an estimated 378,000 acre-feet of water was recycled.

**PASSED**

Under current law, Congress must approve each project. Despite the success of the program and the growing demand for recycled water, no new projects have been authorized since 2011. In addition, the current process locks in funding for projects that may not move forward because of a variety of factors, such as economic downturns, financing or changes in leadership.

Replacing the current process with a merit-based competitive process would allow the best projects to move forward, while maintaining appropriate accountability and congressional oversight.

### ▼ *ACTION 7: Reform the permitting process for Advanced Treated Water.*

Wastewater treatment facilities that recycle water are regulated under two federal laws – the Clean Water Act and the Safe Drinking Water Act. As a result, the federal rules may be duplicative or, at times, even contradictory.

Because treated wastewater is often discharged into the environment, the Clean Water Act requires wastewater facilities to obtain a permit for a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), which regulates the release of pollutants into nature.

However, more wastewater treatment facilities are using advanced treatment technologies to purify wastewater to more stringent water quality standards so it can be used to replenish groundwater or

# 55%

The increase in demand for water by businesses by 2050.



DID YOU KNOW?

supplement reservoirs. Because of this change in operations, the same water is now subject to regulation under the Safe Drinking Water Act.

Regulating Advanced Treated Water under one federal law – the Safe Drinking Water Act – will protect public health and the environment, while cutting red-tape and containing costs.

## ► PROTECT WATER QUALITY

### ▼ *ACTION 8: Amend the WaterSense program to protect water quality.*

WaterSense is a program, administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, that partners with industries, businesses and utilities to promote products, buildings, landscapes, facilities, processes and services that use water efficiently. While the primary purpose of the program is to promote conservation, the program should also consider how water conservation products impact water quality, particularly when salt is added to the wastewater system.

For example, in November 2010, the water industry had to alert the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency about the unintended consequences of promoting self-regenerating water softeners as a water-efficient product. Self-regenerating water softeners, which are installed in homes to “soften” water, produce a salty brine which causes problems when entering the municipal wastewater system. Even after the wastewater is treated, it can have elevated levels of pollutants, such as salt, which prevent it from being recycled and can contribute to the degradation of groundwater quality.

Amending the law to ensure the WaterSense program considers impacts to water quality will increase protection for both water quality and supply.



## DID YOU KNOW?



# 40%

The percent of water used to produce the food we eat and the beverages we drink.



## WATERREUSE

WaterReuse is the only national trade association dedicated solely to advancing laws, regulations, funding and public acceptance for water recycling. Our members include national leaders who are achieving water resiliency through policy, projects, innovation, education and knowledge sharing.

[www.watereuse.org](http://www.watereuse.org)

