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Written Statement on Building Back Better: The Urgent Need for Investment in America's Wastewater Infrastructure

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment

U.S. House of Representatives

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**Patricia Sinicropi
Executive Director
WateReuse Association**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony on Building Back Better: The Urgent Need for Investment in America's Wastewater Infrastructure. I submit this testimony today on behalf of the WateReuse Association and its members to highlight the importance of water reuse and recycling in building resiliency and strengthening America's infrastructure.

WateReuse is a not-for-profit trade association for water utilities, businesses, industrial and commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, and research entities that advocate for water recycling. WateReuse and its state and regional sections represent nearly 250 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 200 businesses and organizations across the country. The WateReuse Association's mission is to engage its members in a movement for safe and sustainable water supplies, to promote acceptance and support of recycled water, and to advocate for policies and funding that increase water reuse.

Water reuse, also known as water recycling, is the process of intentionally capturing wastewater, stormwater, saltwater or graywater and cleaning it as needed for a designated beneficial freshwater purpose, such as drinking, industrial processes, irrigation, groundwater replenishment, and watershed restoration. The fundamental principle of water reuse is using the right water for the right purpose, everywhere and all the time. By advancing water reuse, we protect and enhance the environment while helping communities build resilience to drought, flooding, and other impacts of climate change.

Across the country, water, wastewater, and stormwater managers have shown that water recycling is often a central feature in innovative, integrated approaches to solving water management challenges, including challenges brought on by climate change. In the West and South, the integration of water recycling has often been driven by water supply challenges and the need for drought-resilient supplies. Elsewhere in the country, in the

Pacific Northwest, and in cities such as Chicago, Atlanta, and New York, water recycling has been used to help manage stormwater, address water quality challenges, and relieve overburdened combined sewer-stormwater management systems. Water reuse is also helping communities along our coasts manage the threat of sea level rise and saltwater intrusion through replenishing depleted coastal aquifers.

Some important examples of how communities and businesses are increasingly turning to water reuse to stabilize their water management systems and ensure stronger and more resilient supplies include:

- By 2035, the City of Los Angeles expects to recycle 100% of its water supplies and reduce its reliance on costly imported water from the Colorado River.
- Truckee Meadows Water Authority in Reno is planning 13-mile pipeline to provide 1.3 billion gallons of recycled water annually to the Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center, home to Tesla, Switch and Google, and ensure 20,000 jobs remain in Nevada.
- The Hampton Roads region of Virginia, home to the largest concentration of military and naval installations, plans to recycle 100% of its effluent through an aquifer recovery system to prevent rising sea levels from threatening inundating the entire region.

These are just some of the countless examples of how water recycling is becoming an essential ingredient in efforts to preserve American jobs, businesses and communities as the country adapts and builds resilience to fight climate change.

In order to *Build Back Better and Stronger*, WateReuse strongly urges Congress to substantially increase investments in each of the following programs in FY 2022, through both the annual appropriations process and through an infrastructure package:

- Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants;
- Title XVI-WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Competitive Grants Program;
- Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program; and
- Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program.

Investment in water reuse builds communities that are modern, sustainable and stable—ready for families to flourish and businesses to grow. We urge Congress to act swiftly to provide communities the tools and resources they need to modernize their infrastructure, build resilience, and protect the environment and public health.

Thank you for considering our testimony. Please do not hesitate to reach out the WateReuse Association's Policy Director, Greg Fogel, at gfogel@watereuse.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sinicropi
Executive Director
WateReuse Association

