



WATERREUSE®

625 First Street, #621 • Alexandria, VA 22314

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April 2, 2021

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader, U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders Schumer, McConnell, and McCarthy:

As you begin to craft an infrastructure investment package to modernize our nation's infrastructure and stimulate a large-scale economic recovery, the WateReuse Association urges you to invest in water recycling and related federal programs and policies to help accomplish these goals. By investing in federal water recycling programs now, Congress can give communities and businesses the tools and resources they need to rebound from the pandemic and prepare for the future.

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.

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 sea level rise and saltwater intrusion by replenishing depleted coastal aquifers. Quite simply, water reuse is an essential strategy for building resilient communities and businesses in the face of climate change and uncertain weather events.

In addition to being a critical resource management tool to manage climate-related uncertainties, water recycling projects create jobs, build the water workforce of the future, and sustain vibrant local economies. Water recycling programs like the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Program also have a proven track record of supporting economic recovery following their inclusion in the Recovery Act of 2009.

Examples of the linkage between water reuse and economic resilience exist in each region of the country. The Tahoe-Reno Industrial Center in Nevada, for example, is home to the Tesla Gigafactory and Switch and Google data centers, where a new water recycling project will provide 1.3 billion gallons of recycled water annually to this clean tech and advanced manufacturing center. The project will support advanced manufacturing facilities, and sustain an estimated 20,000 new jobs. In Idaho, water reuse sustains a \$28 billion agricultural sector by providing resilient irrigation resources without putting local water supplies at risk. Elsewhere, water recycling is sustaining local recreational and tourism industries such as ski and golf resorts.

In order to build a modern, resilient, and equitable water infrastructure that can sustain local economies, ensure job creation and address climate change challenges, WaterReuse urges Congress to use upcoming economic stimulus and infrastructure legislation to substantially increase investments in each of the following programs:

- **Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants**

The Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants authorizes the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to make competitive grants to state, interstate, and intrastate water resource development agencies to engineer, design, construct, and test alternative water source systems, including water reuse systems. The program will ensure that communities in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico can access water recycling tools and resources in order to solve local water challenges.

- **Title XVI-WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Competitive Grants Program**

The Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI program is the only active federal program dedicated to advancing water recycling. Through Title XVI-WIIN, the Bureau provides competitive grants to communities in the 17 Western states to support projects that increase drinking water supply, restore sensitive ecosystems, generate sustainable irrigation water, and help industries expand and create jobs, among other regionally important purposes. Title XVI-WIIN has a large and growing backlog of dozens of eligible projects totaling more than \$700 million in eligible federal cost-share, with an authorization that expires at the end of 2021.



We further urge you to increase investments in the Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants Program and the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Programs. Together, these programs provide critical tools to help communities solve a wide range of complex water management challenges.

In addition to the stimulus and infrastructure funding requests listed above, we ask that Congress make the following policy changes to advance water recycling as a resiliency tool:

- **Establish a Federal Interagency Working Group on Water Reuse**

In the course of developing a National Water Reuse Action Plan, which EPA released in 2020, more than a half dozen federal agencies worked in partnership to break down silos and secure tangible commitments to help support the integration of water recycling. This collaboration has effectively leveraged and coordinated available tools and resources throughout the federal family and has broad support among the stakeholder community. We urge the creation of an interagency working group on water reuse to provide continuity and establish a more formal structure for engagement across federal agencies and with external stakeholders.

- **Establish a Dollar-for-Dollar Tax Credit to Encourage Industry to Retrofit Facilities to Accept Recycled Water or Recycle Water Onsite**

Approximately 45 percent of municipal drinking water is used for industrial purposes, from manufacturing every-day products to cooling data centers. The cost to retrofit existing facilities to use recycled water can be prohibitively expensive. A narrowly-focused, dollar-for-dollar reduction in federal income taxes to modernize industrial facilities can make these projects more economically feasible. Incentivizing private investment in water infrastructure benefits our environment, our economy and our standard of living.

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 views.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sinicropi
Executive Director

CC:



Senator Tom Carper
Senator Shelley Moore Capito
Senator Tammy Duckworth
Senator Cynthia Lummis
Senator Ben Cardin
Senator Kevin Cramer
Senator Joe Manchin
Senator John Barrasso
Senator Ron Wyden
Senator Cindy Hyde-Smith
Representative Peter DeFazio
Representative Sam Graves
Representative Grace Napolitano
Representative David Rouzer
Representative Raul Grijalva
Representative Bruce Westerman
Representative Jared Huffman
Representative Cliff Bentz
Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Members of the House Natural Resources Committee
Members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee

