Planned Water Recycling and Investment Needs

In the fall of 2019, WateReuse California conducted a survey of planned water recycling projects throughout the state. Seventy-two agencies responded. The survey showed that by 2030* recycled water projects resulting in 1.3 million acre feet (MAF) per year are planned. Added to the existing 714,000 AFY** that is currently in use, this will bring the total water reuse in California to 2.02 MAF per year by 2030/35. This is a tremendous amount of new water supply that will significantly improve drought and climate resiliency. To put this in perspective, this is enough water to serve more than 4.1 million households, which is the expected population growth (10 million) by 2050.

*Two large projects included in this total may not reach full production until 2035

**Based on the 2015 State Water Board and Department of Water Resources Survey
Reuse Funding Needs for Drought and Climate Resilient Infrastructure

Recycled water and potable reuse projects are some of the most complex projects that agencies undertake and require significant planning and investment. Funding from the state or federal government in the form of low-interest loans or grants is necessary to move most projects forward. Securing funding assistance also sends a strong signal that a project is “endorsed” by the state and/or federal government, which can help build confidence and support from local ratepayers. To secure state or federal funding, most projects must also provide at least 50 percent match of grant funding from local sources (e.g., rates, charges, taxes, local budgets, etc.) and have the local financial capacity to reimburse low-interest loans. The WateReuse California survey showed that the total cost for all planned reuse projects over the next decade is approximately $13.2 billion. See the breakdown of needed funding based on the Regional Water Quality Control Board regions.

REUSE FUNDING NEEDS OVER NEXT DECADE

Region 1 North Coast; Region 2 Bay Area; Region 3 Central Coast; Region 4 LA/Ventura; Region 5 Central Valley; Region 6 Sierra/Eastern Sierra; Region 7 Colorado River; Region 8 Santa Ana River Watershed; Region 9 San Diego/Inland Counties