



August 17, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper, Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate

The Honorable Tammy Duckworth, Chairman
Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate

Dear Chairman Carper and Chairman Duckworth:

On behalf of our hundreds of member organizations, we thank you for your steadfast efforts to enact historic infrastructure legislation that invests in climate change solutions such as water recycling. The WateReuse Association is a not-for-profit trade association for water utilities, businesses, non-profit organizations, and research entities that advocate for policies and programs to advance water recycling. WateReuse represents nearly 250 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 200 businesses and organizations.

As you work to finalize both a bipartisan infrastructure package and a reconciliation package by year's end, WateReuse urges you to invest in water recycling and related federal programs to help communities build climate resilience and a secure economic future. While there are portions of the bipartisan infrastructure package—the *Infrastructure and Jobs Act*—that will support better water resource management, the package falls far short when it comes to investing in nationwide water recycling programs. More specifically, the bill includes no direct spending for the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants. We therefore urge you to use upcoming budget reconciliation legislation to invest no less than \$100 million per year in mandatory funding in the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants (33 U.S.C. 1300).

The Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants is a competitive grants program through which the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) would provide cost share 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 to solve local water challenges.

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Across the country, water, wastewater, and stormwater managers have shown that water recycling can feature in innovative, integrated approaches to managing water resources. The fundamental principle of water reuse is using the right water for the right purpose, everywhere and all the time. By investing in federal water recycling programs now, Congress can give communities the tools and resources they need to prepare for and manage the impacts of climate change, including drought, aquifer depletion, flooding, and land subsidence.

With severe and persistent drought ravaging California, Oregon, and other Western states, the need for water recycling in the West has never been clearer. In the rest of the country, water recycling also plays a critical role in helping communities prepare for extreme weather and other climate change impacts. For example:

- 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 inundating the entire region.
- In New York City, Battery Park's Solaire residential complex uses onsite water recycling to reduce water consumption by 48 percent, energy consumption by 35 percent, and peak demand for electricity by 65 percent. During Super Storm Sandy when lower Manhattan experienced severe flooding that disrupted power and sewer service, Solaire's water recycling system provided continuous service to its residents.
- In Florida's Tampa Bay region, water reuse has emerged as a centerpiece for the region's approach to water supply reliability, meeting dry season irrigation demands and relieving pressure on the region's limited potable supplies. Hillsborough County's aquifer recharge program is protecting the region's freshwater aquifer from sea level rise, reducing pumping costs and energy use, supporting seagrass and fishery recovery efforts in Tampa Bay.

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 help communities build climate resilience and protect public health and the environment. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sinicropi
Executive Director

