



WATERREUSE®

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January 31, 2022

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of our hundreds of member organizations, we thank you for your steadfast efforts to enact the *Build Back Better Act*, which would invest in climate change solutions such as water recycling. The WaterReuse 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. WaterReuse represents nearly 250 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 200 businesses and organizations.

As you navigate a path forward on the *Build Back Better Act*, WaterReuse urges you to maintain the bill's investments in water recycling programs to help communities build climate resilience and a secure economic future. More specifically, the bill includes \$125 million in direct spending for the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants, as well as \$100 million for competitive grants for large-scale water recycling projects (SECS. 110028 and 70310, respectively, of the \$1.75 trillion version of Build Back Better released in late October). We urge you to maintain and protect this funding in any final legislation that emerges from negotiations on the *Build Back Better Act*.

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.

The Competitive Grant Program for Large Scale Water Reuse and Recycling Projects would provide a 25 percent cost share for very large Western water reuse projects, including regional projects that provide critical water supply and environmental co-benefits.

Across the country, water, wastewater, and stormwater managers have shown that water recycling can be a central 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 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 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 to neighborhoods and towns, Solaire's water recycling system provided continuous service to its residents.
- In Florida's Tampa Bay region, water reuse is a centerpiece of the region's approach to water supply reliability, meeting dry season irrigation demands and relieving pressure on 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

Cc:

Senator Tom Carper
Senator Joe Manchin

Representative Peter DeFazio
Representative Grace Napolitano

Representative Raul Grijalva
Representative Jared Huffman