

# WATER REUSE CALIFORNIA



March 14, 2022

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor, State of California  
1021 O Street, Suite 9000  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Toni Atkins  
Pro Tempore, California State Senate  
1021 O Street, Suite 8518  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon  
Speaker, California State Assembly  
1021 O Street, Suite 8330  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Nancy Skinner  
Chair, Senate Budget Committee  
1020 N Street, Suite 502  
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Phil Ting  
Chair, Assembly Budget Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8230  
Sacramento, CA 95814

## **RE: Request \$750 million for Recycled Water and Revise Budget Language**

Dear Governor Newsom, Pro Tem Atkins and Speaker Rendon, Chair Skinner and Chair Ting:

The undersigned agencies respectfully **request the inclusion of \$750 million in grant funds for recycled water** as part of the Drought Resilience and Response package. Recycled water is a

sustainable, local of source of water that is nearly drought proof. With our state still in serious drought conditions, and the impacts of climate change worsening, the time is now to make a major investment in recycled water. CalEPA Secretary Jared Blumenfeld noted on his January 12 “Proposed Water Investments in State Budget” briefing that “every ounce of water we can recycle and come up with a new use, obviously takes enormous pressure off the natural systems.”

### **Need for Additional State Investment**

The 2021 federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act made \$1 billion available to recycling projects in **all Western States** over five years (approximately \$200 million a year). Yet this will not come close to meeting the funding demands for all the Western States, especially California. As Secretary Blumenfeld again noted on January 12, “**the needs for recycled water exceed \$10 billion**, in fact the needs for the LA Basin itself exceed \$12 billion.” The State Water Resources Control Board has noted that there is a \$1.8 billion need between 2021-2024.

Every region of the state has planned large-scale water recycling projects in need of funding that can vastly stretch our traditional water supplies and prepare our state for the worsening impacts of climate change. These include projects for potable reuse, including groundwater recharge, reservoir augmentation and direct potable reuse (DPR). The Water Board is currently developing statewide regulations for DPR which will greatly expand the use of recycled water for drinking water purposes. Other planned projects include expanding agricultural reuse to protect the environment and limited groundwater supplies; industrial reuse; landscape irrigation and more.

### **Three-Year Drought Package Contains Only Small Statewide Investment in Recycled Water**

The total three-year drought package passed last year only contains \$350 million in statewide funding for recycled water split over three years with groundwater cleanup. It is entirely possible that the State Board will allocate more than 50 percent of those funds to groundwater cleanup. In addition to increased funding, recycled water should have a standalone allocation.

### **Budget Language Needs Revision**

Recycled water investments in the current and future budgets should be clearly specified by the California Legislature and decoupled from groundwater cleanup funding.

### **Create Large Project Funding Category**

Further, if the Legislature agrees that recycled water funding should be vastly increased in the Drought Resilience and Response Package, we recommend the creation of a “large project” funding category, similar to the structure of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. This will allow smaller recycled water projects to receive funding without being in funding competition with the larger multi-billion-dollar projects that are currently planned in the state.

While there are other worthy water supply projects that should be part of the Drought Resilience and Response Package, we hope you will agree with us that funding for **recycled water deserves to be at the forefront of the state’s three-year drought response with a \$750 million state investment**. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jennifer West  
Managing Director  
WaterReuse California

Elizabeth Dawson  
Engineering Manager  
El Dorado Irrigation District

Jim Lewis  
City Manager  
City of Pismo Beach

Matt Bronson  
City Manager  
City of Grover Beach

Bob McDonald  
General Manager  
Carpinteria Valley Water District

Dave Pedersen  
General Manager  
Las Virgenes Municipal Water District

Clifford Chan  
General Manager  
East Bay Municipal Utility District

Paul Sciuto  
General Manager  
Monterey One Water

Shivaji Deshmukh  
General Manager  
Inland Empire Utilities Agency

Allen Carlisle  
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Padre Dam Municipal Water District

Rick Callender  
Chief Executive Officer  
Valley Water

EJ Caldwell  
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West Basin Municipal Water District

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Joe Mouawad  
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