

Written Statement on FY 2023 Requests
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development
United States Senate
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Submitted by:

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Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony on Fiscal Year 2023 appropriations. I write today on behalf of the WateReuse Association and its members to highlight the importance of the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR) Title XVI-WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Competitive Grants Program and the Desalination and Water Purification Program. The Title XVI-WIIN Program and Desalination and Water Purification Program have helped communities across the West build drought resilience, keep nutrients and other pollutants out of sensitive waterways, save billions of dollars relative to importing water, and grow sustainable economies. They are key economic and climate resiliency tools.

Given the critical role that water recycling plays in water resources management and the overwhelming demand for projects as authorized in section 4009(c) of Public Law 114-322, we urge you to include \$20 million for Title XVI-WIIN in Energy and Water Development appropriations legislation for FY 2023. Along with direct appropriations provided by the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021*, this funding will help USBR meet the overwhelming demand for Title XVI-WIIN program dollars. In addition to our request for Title XVI-WIIN, we support a funding level that meets demand for USBR's Desalination and Water Purification Program in FY 2023. The Desalination Program invests in projects in Reclamation states that involve ocean or brackish water desalination. In the arid West, desalination is an important tool that can help communities increase their water supply.

The WateReuse Association is a not-for-profit trade association for water utilities, businesses, industrial and commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, and research entities that engage in and on water recycling. WateReuse and its state and regional sections represent more than 200 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 300 businesses and organizations across the country. Our mission is to engage our members in a movement for safe and sustainable water supplies, to promote acceptance and support of recycled water, and to advocate for policies and funding that increase water reuse.

Since Title XVI's inception in 1992, Congress has authorized 53 Title XVI recycling projects producing more than 400,000 acre-feet of drought-resistant water supply. To date, USBR has obligated over \$700 million in federal funding, which has been leveraged with non-federal funding to implement more than \$3.3 billion in water reuse improvements – a nearly 5:1 leverage ratio. Due to the popularity of Title XVI-WIIN, the program has a large backlog exceeding \$700 million in federal cost share for eligible projects, and demand is expected to grow as more projects become

eligible. While the IIJA will help USBR meet some of this demand, additional discretionary appropriations are and will continue to be needed.

Water projects funded through the Title XVI program have been used to increase the supply of fresh drinking water, generate sustainable irrigation water for landscaping and agricultural use, restore sensitive ecosystems, and help industries expand and create jobs, among other purposes. The program is not limited to the reuse of municipal wastewater – it also helps communities identify beneficial uses for industrial, agricultural, and domestic wastewater, as well as impaired ground and surface water. Investments through the Title XVI competitive grants program have helped both urban and rural communities across the West build a strong and secure economic future.

A recent GAO report (GAO-19-110) highlighted a number of illustrative Title XVI projects. For example, program investments helped one drought-stricken water district in California develop infrastructure to use more than 2 billion gallons of recycled water to irrigate sports fields, golf courses, parks, school grounds, and medians. Another project is providing drought-resistant recycled water to farmers to irrigate 45,000 acres of farmland, reducing demand on the area's over-drafted groundwater basin. Other Title XVI projects have been used to prevent saltwater intrusion into aquifers, restore marshes, wetlands, and other habitat, and create potable drinking water.

Thank you for considering our requests and please do not hesitate to reach out if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Greg Fogel
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WateReuse Association