



# WATEREUSE®

610 Madison Street, Suite 101, Box 621  
Alexandria, VA 22314

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**Craig Lichty**  
Black & Veatch, CA

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El Paso Water, TX

October 14, 2022

The Honorable Shalanda Young  
Director  
Office of Management and Budget  
725 17th Street, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20503

The Honorable Deb Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

The Honorable Michael Regan  
Administrator  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
1201 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Director Young, Secretary Haaland, and Administrator Regan:

As you begin to prepare the President's Budget Request for FY 2024, we urge you to advance water resiliency by including funding for critical water recycling programs. We appreciate your strong support for water reuse investments in the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021* (IIJA) and in your FY 2023 Budget Request, and we urge you to renew that support in FY 2024.

WateReuse 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 reuse. 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 advance safe and sustainable water supplies, to promote acceptance and support of recycled water, and to advocate for policies and funding that increase water reuse.

As climate change accelerates, and its associated impacts on water resources increase, the nation must invest in water recycling to build resilience, manage energy demands, support public and environmental health, and ensure America's economic prosperity. Investments in water recycling ensure reliable and resilient community water supplies, support sustainable economic development, and help protect our rivers, lakes, streams, aquifers and wetlands.

## **FY24 BUDGET RECOMMENDATIONS**

To help communities build climate resilience and tackle critical water quality and quantity challenges, we recommend that the FY 2024 Budget include the following requests for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and U.S. Department of Interior.

### **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency**

We urge you to renew your FY 2023 request of \$25 million for the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants (33 U.S.C. 1300). The WaterReuse Association strongly supported this request for FY 2023.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 40 U.S. states are experiencing moderate drought or worse. Droughts have brought severe conditions including wildfires, heat waves, depleted water sources, and reduced crop production to every region of the country. In the West, severe and persistent drought threatens the environment, public health, and economies. Elsewhere in the country, communities are dealing with depleted or shrinking groundwater reserves, saltwater intrusion, and other significant threats to fresh water sources. In parts of Pennsylvania, Illinois, New England, and other regions across the country, communities are facing significant and even extreme drought conditions.

To address the nationwide impacts of climate change, Congress authorized the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants as part of the recently enacted IJA. When funded, the program will become the first nationwide program dedicated to advancing water reuse. Through the program, EPA will make competitive grants to state, interstate, and intrastate water resource development agencies to engineer, design, construct, and test alternative water source systems, including water reuse systems.

In addition to launching and expanding the Alternative Water Source Grants Pilot Program, we urge you to renew your strong support for the work being led by EPA's water reuse team within the Office of Water, including implementation of the National Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP) and the Water Reuse Interagency Working Group. The WRAP has helped drive progress on water reuse research, programs, policies, communication, and outreach by bringing industry stakeholders, academia, and all levels of government together to develop and implement dozens of actions. The Interagency Working Group will further advance this work by breaking down silos and aligning and leveraging programs and resources across the federal family. In the FY 2023 Budget Request, the Administration highlighted this work and pledged that it would continue. We recommend that the FY 2024 Budget once again express this support and include robust funding to continue these activities.



## **U.S. Department of Interior, Bureau of Reclamation**

We urge you to request \$20 million for both the Title XVI-WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Competitive Grants Program (Section 4009(c) of Public Law 114-322) and the Desalination and Water Purification Program in FY 2024. Climate change is profoundly impacting the natural environment and hydrologically dependent water supplies. In the West, conditions are at their driest point in 1,200 years and are worsening. More than ever, communities across the West need resources to build a climate-resilient water infrastructure to withstand increasing and more intense drought conditions. The Title XVI-WIIN Program and Desalination and Water Purification Program help 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.

By investing in federal water recycling programs now, Congress can give communities in all 50 states plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico the tools and resources they need to prepare for and manage the impacts of the climate crisis, including drought, aquifer depletion, flooding, and land subsidence. Across the country, water, wastewater, and stormwater managers have shown that water recycling can be a central feature in innovative, integrated approaches to solving water management challenges.

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act made a historic investment in the nation's water infrastructure. We urge you to continue to build upon this investment by requesting robust and critical appropriations for water recycling in FY 2024.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sinicropi  
Executive Director

Cc:

Candace Vahlsing  
Associate Director for Climate, Energy, Environment, and Science  
Office of Management and Budget  
Executive Office of the President



The Honorable Camille Touton  
Commissioner  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Department of Interior

The Honorable Radhika Fox  
Assistant Administrator  
Office of Water  
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

