

**Written Statement on Clean Water Infrastructure Financing: State and Local Perspectives
and Recent Developments**

**Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment**

**U.S. House of Representatives
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WateReuse Association**

Thank you for providing the opportunity to submit written testimony on Clean Water Infrastructure Financing: State and Local Perspectives and Recent Developments. I submit this testimony today on behalf of the WateReuse Association and its members to highlight the importance of financing water reuse and recycling to build resiliency and strengthen America's infrastructure.

WateReuse is a not-for-profit trade association for water utilities, businesses, industrial and commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, and research entities that advocate for water recycling. WateReuse and its state and regional sections represent nearly 250 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 200 businesses and organizations across the country. The WateReuse Association's mission is to engage its 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.

Water reuse, also known as water recycling, is the process of intentionally capturing wastewater, stormwater, saltwater or graywater and cleaning it as needed for a designated beneficial freshwater purpose, such as drinking, industrial processes, irrigation, groundwater replenishment, and watershed restoration. The fundamental principle of water reuse is using the right water for the right purpose, everywhere and all the time. By advancing water reuse, we protect public health and the environment while supporting strong and growing local economies.

Across the country, water, wastewater, and stormwater managers have shown that water recycling is often a central feature in innovative, integrated approaches to solving water management challenges. In the West and South, the integration of water recycling has often been driven by water supply challenges and the need for drought-resilient supplies. Elsewhere in the country, water recycling has been used to help manage stormwater, address water quality challenges, and relieve overburdened combined sewer-stormwater management systems. Water reuse is helping communities along our coasts manage sea level rise and saltwater intrusion by replenishing depleted coastal aquifers. It is also increasingly used as an economic development tool, attracting

businesses and growing jobs by providing a stable water supply and a pathway to protect local groundwater and surface water.

To help communities achieve these goals, Congress reauthorized the **Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants (33 U.S.C. 1300)** as part of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) of 2021. 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 and stormwater management systems. The House FY 2024 Interior-Environment Appropriations bill includes start-up funding of \$3 million for the program, whereas the Senate companion includes none. We urge this Committee to work with appropriators to ensure that the final FY 2024 appropriations package makes this important investment in water recycling.

In addition to funding the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants, we urge you to work with the Appropriations Committee to fully fund the **Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) Programs** in final FY 2024 appropriations legislation. The cuts proposed in the House Interior-Environment Appropriations bill would severely limit communities' ability to access financing for water recycling and other water infrastructure projects. Moreover, we ask that Congress fund Clean Water and Drinking Water earmarks on top of and in addition to *rather than from within* funding for SRF capitalization grants. The current approach of funding earmarks from within the SRF capitalization grants budget is undermining states' ability to operate and maintain viable revolving loan programs.

Investments in water reuse build communities that are modern, sustainable and stable—ready for families to flourish and businesses to grow. We urge Congress to act swiftly to provide communities the tools and resources they need to modernize their infrastructure, build resilience, and protect the environment and public health.

Thank you for considering our testimony. Please do not hesitate to reach out the WateReuse Association's Policy Director, Greg Fogel, at gfogel@watereuse.org with any questions.

Sincerely,



Patricia Sinicropi
Executive Director