

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable John Kennedy
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate

The Honorable Chuck Fleischmann
Chair, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Marcy Kaptur
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Energy
and Water Development
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives

DATE

Dear Chair Murray, Chairman Fleischmann, Ranking Member Kennedy and Ranking Member Kaptur:

On behalf of the undersigned communities, utilities, and businesses, we urge you to support forward-looking investments in America's water future by funding the Title XVI Water Reclamation and Reuse Grants Program at no less than \$30 million, of which at least \$20 million should be provided for projects as authorized by section 4009(c) of Public Law 114-322.

Water reuse, also known as water recycling, is the process of intentionally capturing wastewater, stormwater, 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. 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 Title XVI Water Reuse Grants Program provides federal cost share for water recycling projects in 17 Western states. The program has 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. It is a key economic and climate resiliency tool.

As you know, the Title XVI program has two components—a competitive grants component known as WIIN Title XVI, and a congressionally directed spending component whereby projects are individually authorized and funded by Congress. While Title XVI competitive grants have become the core of the program since the enactment of the WIIN Act in 2016,

both components continue to provide critical funding for water recycling programs across the West. Among eligible projects that have received WIIN-Title XVI funding in recent years, the remaining federal cost-share backlog exceeds \$562 million. As we approach the expiration of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), Congress must begin to increase rather than decrease annual appropriations for the Title XVI-WIIN program. Previous years have shown that \$20 million per year is woefully insufficient to meet the annual demand from eligible entities.

While demand for funding for individually authorized projects has been low relative to demand for Title XVI-WIIN, seven congressionally authorized projects have requested funding in the last five years. Five of these have yet to meet their funding caps, for a total of \$51,380,927 in remaining federal cost-share. These communities have plans in place with work being done to design, build, test and deploy important water recycling projects. Congress must not leave them high and dry as they request funding to complete their projects in the coming years.

The drivers for water reuse are many. In recent years, droughts have brought severe conditions including wildfires, heat waves, severely depleted water sources, and reduced crop production across the country. Despite last year's snowpack and rain events, conditions in the West were recently at their driest point in 1,200 years and are expected to worsen. In addition to combatting supply constraints, communities and industries are also turning to water reuse to meet stringent discharge regulations and reduce pollutant loads to receiving waters.

By investing in the Title XVI Water Reuse Grants Program, Congress can give communities the tools and resources they need to protect public health and the environment, support economic development, and create long-term solutions for future generations. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,