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EPA Seeks Comment and Commitment on Draft National Water Reuse Action Plan

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SAN DIEGO — Today, at the 34th Annual WaterReuse Symposium in San Diego, California, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced the release of a draft National Water Reuse Action Plan that identifies priority actions and the leadership and collaboration that is needed between governmental and nongovernmental organizations to implement these actions. Water reuse represents a major opportunity to support our nation’s communities and economy by bolstering safe and reliable water supplies for human consumption, agriculture, business, industry, recreation and healthy ecosystems.

“Forty states anticipate experiencing fresh water shortages in certain regions within their borders over the next decade,” **said U.S. EPA’s Assistant Administrator for Water David Ross**. “Diversifying our nation’s water portfolio must be a nationwide priority, and water reuse has the potential to ensure the viability of our water economy for generations to come.”

The draft National Water Reuse Action Plan is the first initiative of this magnitude that is coordinated across the water sector. It was built upon extensive outreach, research and prior engagement with the water sector. The inclusive approach used to develop the draft plan recognizes that meaningful advancement of water reuse is best accomplished by working cooperatively with all water sector stakeholders. The draft plan incorporates federal, state, tribal and local water perspectives and highlights key actions that support consideration and implementation of water reuse. EPA’s goal is to issue a final plan that will include clear commitments and milestones for actions that will further water reuse to bolster the sustainability, security and resilience of the nation’s water resources.

The draft plan was announced during a panel discussion with federal partners—the Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Department of Energy, Department of Interior, Department of the Army, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ). During the panel, the federal partners noted the work of their departments and agencies and highlighted the importance of federal coordination and leadership on water reuse, which supports last year’s [Presidential Memorandum on Promoting the Reliable Supply and Delivery of Water in the West](#).

“The Water Reuse Action Plan is a dynamic collaboration of federal partners and stakeholders to innovate and utilize water reuse technology to meet water challenges of today and prepare for the water needs of tomorrow. Developing and deploying these technologies to secure a safe water supply for our nation is a top priority of this administration” **said Assistant Secretary for Water and Science at the Department of the Interior Tim Petty.**

“Ensuring reliable water supplies for the future takes a combination of innovation approaches, from advancing critical infrastructure projects to implementing new conservation strategies. Water reuse is an important component of Reclamation’s all-of-the-above model, and we are committed to continuing our investment in water reuse for local communities throughout the West,” **said Brenda Burman, Commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation.**

“Water and energy are intrinsically intertwined critical resources for America,” **said Department of Energy’s Assistant Secretary for the Office of Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Daniel Simmons.** “New research and technology innovation, along with increased collaborations identified in the new Water Reuse Action Plan will help advance our nations’ water security and reduce water-related risks for our energy systems.”

“USDA works side-by-side with agricultural producers—with the help of public and private partners—to make land management decisions that benefit natural resources, including conservation and reuse of water,” **said Bill Northey, U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation.** “Voluntary conservation on agricultural lands is one of the tools we have to address water challenges.”

“The Corps of Engineers looks forward to working with our federal partners and local sponsors to identify water reuse opportunities as we deploy infrastructure solutions,” **said Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works Ryan Fisher.**

“The National Water Reuse Action Plan will be a game changer,” **said Patricia Sinicropi, Executive Director of the WaterReuse Association.** “WaterReuse commends EPA and Assistant Administrator Ross for bringing together the federal family and moving forward a bold plan for water recycling. Communities across the country are incorporating water reuse into their water management strategies as a proven method for ensuring a safe, reliable, locally controlled water supply--essential for livable communities, healthy environments, robust economies and a high quality of life. We look forward to working with EPA, other federal agencies, and the broader stakeholder community to further develop and strengthen the Action Plan in the months ahead.”

“Water scarcity is a real and pressing challenge for many parts of our country, and is something this administration is dedicated to addressing,” **said CEQ Chairman Mary Neumayr.** “The WRAP is a practical example of federal agencies coming together to address our Nation’s most pressing water challenges and I look forward to working with all the agencies and bureaus represented as we continue to promote coordinated water resource management across the country.”

EPA seeks to collaborate with all stakeholder groups on this plan and is soliciting public input through a 90-day public comment period. For more information, including opportunities to engage with EPA on this effort, visit <https://www.epa.gov/waterreuse/water-reuse-action-plan>.

Background:

Water reuse—sometimes referred to as water recycling—is an innovative and dynamic strategy that can dramatically change the future of water availability in the U.S. Water reuse can be used to meet water demands and mitigate the risks posed by droughts. Recycled water can be used for a wide variety of applications, including agriculture, potable water supplies, groundwater replenishment, industrial processes and environmental restoration. Further developments in water reuse provide more secure, sustainable and safe water supplies across the country.



U.S. EPA Assistant Administrator for Water David Ross (bottom row, second from the left) and Administration officials announce the draft National Water Reuse Action Plan at the 34th Annual WaterReuse Symposium in San Diego, California.

