



## Industrial Water Solutions Conference Convenes Business and Utility Leaders Driving the Circular Water Economy

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COLUMBUS, OH - The Water Environment Federation (WEF) and WateReuse Association hosted the Industrial Water Solutions conference June 23-25 in Columbus, Ohio.

The event brought together more than 380 professionals from the water sector and industry to address strategies for sustainable water management in the industrial space. Speakers and attendees across industries including food and beverage, technology, manufacturing, government, utilities, and more, explored water technologies and policies that will drive a circular water economy.

“Water is the fuel of the new economy,” said WateReuse Association interim executive director Brian Biesemeyer. “We’re proud to have brought together leaders from industry and utilities to have critical conversations about how water reuse and other sustainable water management strategies can protect local water supply while supporting economic and job growth.”

### Circular Water Economy: A New Paradigm for Industry

“We are thinking about water in a new way,” said Ralph Erik Exton, executive director of WEF, during opening remarks. “By moving to a circular water economy and by reusing, recovering and regenerating water, we’re protecting the environment and securing resources for future generations. We’re also creating real business value.”

A new whitepaper commissioned by WEF and developed by Dalberg Advisors was introduced at the conference, outlining how scaling circular practices like water reuse,

biogas recovery and aquifer recharge could unlock up to \$47 billion annually in value for U.S. utilities and municipalities.

### **Water Solutions Power AI Revolution**

With the global AI market poised to increase exponentially over the next decade, the Industrial Water Solutions conference highlighted strategies to accommodate the significant water demand AI requires. Conference participants heard perspectives on the future of water reuse and data from Google, Intel, Amazon Web Services, and Equinix.

A panel on High Tech and Data Center Cooling brought together representatives from the tech industry and utilities with water experts to discuss sustainable water management strategies for high-growth sectors. Attendees also toured the New Albany Business Park, a 9,000-acre campus with more than 100 facilities contributing to Ohio's data center boom.

### **Evolving Policy and Regulatory Landscape**

Experts from the automotive, food and beverage, tech, law, government, science, and engineering industries discussed how circular water strategies drive economic growth and provided insights on navigating the evolving regulatory and policy landscape to ensure cost-effective solutions. Andrew Sawyers, director of the Office of Wastewater Management at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA), provided a keynote address on policy opportunities to accommodate the AI revolution and the Administration's goal of reshoring automotive manufacturing.

One key policy solution gaining traction in Washington, DC is the [\*Advancing Water Reuse Act\*](#), which presenters highlighted last week in Columbus. WaterReuse is working with Congress to champion this bill, with support from WEF and other water industry partners. The bill would establish a federal investment tax credit for industries that use recycled water. Congress has the opportunity to incentivize water reuse for American industry in upcoming tax legislation: ensuring that communities have safe drinking water supplies, industries have access to clean water necessary to expand and create new jobs, and our economic future remains strong and secure.

### **Industry and Utility Partnerships Critical**

Partnerships between industry and utilities to achieve water management goals were a core theme of Industrial Water Solutions. A panel on intersectoral partnerships highlighted how public-private partnerships facilitate sustainable water solutions and a collaborative approach to water management.

“As the American economy continues to diversify and strengthen, especially within the information marketplace, events like IWS are critical for communities and private entities alike,” said John Kmiec, director of Tucson Water. “What this conference brings together are the common interests and open communication between water providers and the industries that are ready to work with them. This event is making those connections count.”

### **The Future of Industrial Water Management Is Bright**

“My takeaway from the event is that we are collaborating more, we are talking to each other and coming together from the municipal side and the engineering elements... I’m really excited seeing all the energy and the positive dialogue here,” said Zeynep Erdal, integrated solutions leader at Black & Veatch.

Mark Cassalia of the CEO Water Mandate closed the event by underscoring the role of corporate water stewardship in building a resilient future. “Our leading companies have been showing the way in terms of evolution of water stewardship. They will continue to lead the way as case studies for our customers who will follow their example.”