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DC Water and the Water Environment Federation Launch Development of a National Green Infrastructure Certification Program

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 8, 2016 – DC Water and the Water Environment Federation (WEF) have signed an agreement to develop a National Green Infrastructure Certification Program aimed at promoting skilled individuals who will install, inspect, and maintain green infrastructure (GI) systems. In addition, the program will help support community-based job creation in U.S. cities, and establish national standards for professionals seeking to work on GI projects.

This joint effort will support DC Water's recently announced legal agreement to construct large-scale GI to help control combined sewer overflows (CSOs) in the District of Columbia. The agreement was an amendment to a 2005 Consent Decree between DC Water and the District of Columbia, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the U.S. Department of Justice, and is the basis for DC Water's \$2.6 billion DC Clean Rivers Project. In an average year of rainfall, DC Water's Clean Rivers Project will decrease the city's CSO volume by 96 percent to the area's primary waterways.

In addition to helping reduce CSOs, GI practices (such as bioretention or rain gardens, pervious pavement, rain barrels, and green roofs) can provide triple-bottom-line (environmental, social, and economic) benefits to the District and other cities nationwide. DC Water is committed to developing an ambitious local jobs creation program that includes GI training and certification opportunities for District residents. DC Water has established a goal to have 51 percent of new jobs created by the GI project filled by District residents and will also engage professional service firms and contractors based in the District for associated projects.

"Today's agreement with WEF is a critical step forward for DC Water's ambitious GI program," said DC Water CEO and General Manager George S. Hawkins. "Establishing a national certification program will ensure DC residents are prepared to work not only on DC Water projects, but it also positions them to benefit from the greater GI industry that is growing nationally."

WEF is helping to support and elevate this effort by developing a national certification program with DC Water that will meet international best practice standards. Housed within the WEF Stormwater Institute, the certification will verify that individuals performing the installation, inspection, and maintenance of GI have the required knowledge, skills, and abilities to support long-term performance and sustainability of these systems.

The program components—including a requirement for regular re-certification—will be developed on an expedited schedule, with the first certifications being granted in early 2017. To provide a national perspective on stormwater management needs and green workforce goals, WEF is seeking partners to join a coalition of stormwater leaders from across the country. The coalition will assist with the creation of the program's vision and guide its implementation. The coalition currently includes the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District, which has partnered with DC Water and WEF to support similar local goals of developing green jobs and a skilled workforce to install and maintain GI.

“Stormwater management is a priority for the District of Columbia and for many cities, not just in the U.S., but all over the world,” said WEF Executive Director Eileen O’Neill. “It is increasingly recognized that GI offers an environmentally- and economically-beneficial management option. We’re excited to be working with DC Water and other recognized leaders in stormwater management to devise a national certification program that will support the development of a skilled workforce and the creation of jobs that contribute to sustainable communities.”

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About DC Water

The District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority (DC Water), is an industry leading multi-jurisdictional regional utility that provides drinking water, wastewater collection and treatment to 600,000 residential, commercial and governmental customers in the District of Columbia, 17.8 million annual visitors and also collects and treats wastewater for 1.6 million customers in Montgomery and Prince Georges counties in Maryland and Fairfax and Loudoun counties in Virginia. To learn more, visit www.dewater.com.

About WEF

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 33,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the environment. As a global water sector leader, our mission is to connect water professionals; enrich the expertise of water professionals; increase the awareness of the impact and value of water; and provide a platform for water sector innovation. To learn more, visit www.wef.org.

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