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New National Poll Finds 95% of Americans Want Public Officials to Invest in Water Systems, 60% Are Willing to Pay More for Secure Water Service

Americans believe that modernizing water systems should be a priority to ensure safe and reliable water and wastewater service

ALEXANDRIA, Va., February 24, 2016 – The Value of Water Coalition today released the results of a new national poll on public attitudes and concerns about water. The Water Environment Federation (WEF), along with thirty other public and private water agencies, business and community leaders, and national organizations, is a member of this national coalition that has come together to advance positive solutions to America's pressing water challenges.

Conducted in January 2016, the survey found that Americans are deeply concerned with the state of water infrastructure and are willing to support efforts to invest and modernize these systems to ensure and maintain reliable water and wastewater services.

"It's clear that a dialogue is needed on appropriate policy steps to guarantee a sustainable and strong local-state-federal partnership to address America's enormous water infrastructure challenges," said WEF Executive Director Eileen O'Neill. "Everyone uses water so its management is really a shared responsibility. We are greatly encouraged by the poll results, which shows an increased public recognition of how essential it is to have clean water and safe, reliable infrastructure and the importance of everyone doing their part."

Respondents were initially evenly split (47/47) with their willingness to personally spend more on their water bills for increased investment in water systems. Once poll respondents received additional information about water issues, there was a 13 percent increase to 60 percent of Americans in favor of paying more to invest in water infrastructure.

The Flint, Michigan water contamination was also a consideration as 95 percent of respondents said it was important or very important for public officials to invest in water systems so other communities wouldn't face a similar situation.

“This is a critical time and important opportunity to have a conversation across the country about the importance of investing in our water systems. Being able to drink water straight from the tap and knowing that wastewater is safely and responsibly treated are top concerns for Americans. As a nation, we must prioritize investment in our water systems—to maintain high-quality water service today and for future generations,” said Radhika Fox, director of the Value of Water Coalition and CEO of the US Water Alliance.

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About the poll: American Viewpoints and Hart Research conducted this national poll via phone of 1,000 adults across the country in January 2016. The margin of error is +/- 3.1 percent at 95 percent confidence, and fifty percent of the interviewees had a cell phone.

About The Value of Water Coalition

The Value of Water Coalition educates and inspires people about how water is essential, invaluable, and needs investment. The Coalition has come together to advance positive solutions to our nation's pressing water challenges. Members include: Alexandria Renew Enterprises, American Society of Civil Engineers, American Water, American Water Works Association, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, Black and Veatch, Brown and Caldwell, Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, CH2M, DC Water, Dow Chemical Company, Hampton Roads Sanitation District, Hazen and Sawyer, Kansas City Water Services, LA Sanitation, Metropolitan Sewer District of Greater Cincinnati, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago, MWH Global, National Association of Clean Water Agencies, National Association of Water Companies, Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District, Philadelphia Water Department, Plumbing Manufacturers International, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Suez, US Water Alliance, Veolia, WateReuse, Water Environment Federation, and Xylem, Inc. To learn more, visit www.thevalueofwater.org

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.