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## **Water Week 2020 Brings Together Water Sector in Virtual Event to Advocate Priorities to Congress**

*Public Water Sector Remains Committed to Working with Congress on Stimulus Relief as Result of COVID-19 Pandemic, as well as Water Infrastructure Investment, PFAS Remediation, Affordability Issues, and More*

(Washington, D.C.) – Today marks the beginning of Water Week 2020, as thousands of representatives from across the water sector, including wastewater, drinking water and stormwater utility leaders, advocate for their most pressing issues before Congress and federal agencies. Initially slated to be a week-long series of events in Washington, D.C. and throughout the country, this year's event has been modified to become a virtual event in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. **The focal point of these virtual efforts will be a Water Week webinar which will take place on Wednesday, April 29 from 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m. ET and will feature messages from Members of Congress and EPA senior staff.**

Jackie Jarrell, President of the Water Environment Federation, shared the following message, "The coronavirus pandemic is highlighting the absolutely essential role of water services and the water workforce in communities across the United States, so this year Water Week is an opportunity to ensure that Congress and the Administration recognize the need to support and invest in water."

"While it is unfortunate that we are unable to gather in person this year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the public clean water sector is no less determined to share its message with Congress," says Adam Krantz, CEO of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies. "The current national crisis has made clear the essential nature of clean water services and Congress must act in a bipartisan manner to provide much-needed support and funding for the sector."

Patricia Sinicropi, Executive Director of the Water Reuse Association said, "Now more than ever before, communities are turning to water recycling to ensure a safe, clean, sustainable water supply, to help build local economies and create jobs, and to meet growing environmental and public health challenges. Water Week brings stakeholders from around the country together to advocate with one voice, and to urge greater federal investment in proven solutions like water recycling."



“Now more than ever, we need to implement One Water innovative approaches based on the latest science to meet the future challenges facing the water sector”, said Peter Grevatt, CEO of The Water Research Foundation. “Water research is the key to unlocking these opportunities”.

As the pandemic advances and reverberates throughout the economy, water sector organizations are emphasizing the impact that the sudden economic slowdown can have on local utilities. NACWA estimates a \$16.8 Billion impact to clean water agencies, and AMWA/AWWA estimate a \$13.9 Billion aggregate financial impact to drinking water utilities. Through the coronavirus response packages, water sector organizations are urging Congress to provide financial assistance to make utilities whole for providing water services regardless of ability to pay during the pandemic and to help mitigate lost revenues resulting from sharp, sudden declines in water use as businesses and industries shutter. There are also tens of billions of water infrastructure projects that can be a part of a broader stimulus package as the focus turns to putting people back to work.

These new challenges and opportunities stemming from the pandemic come on top of the water sector’s traditional authorization and appropriation asks, which urge robust funding for water infrastructure investment, research and innovation. With the federal cost-share for water infrastructure investment in the U.S. below 5 percent, the sector continues to fight for a strong federal-state-local partnership to protect public and environmental health in our country. As part of its regular authorization and appropriations efforts, the water sector calls on Congress to:

- Reauthorize the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and double the current funding level of \$1.64 billion to \$3.3 billion for FY2021
- Reauthorize and fund the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund at an annual level not below its full FY21 authorization of \$1.95 billion
- Support the USDA Rural Development Water & Wastewater Loan and Grant Program by providing \$1.6 billion in loans and \$600 million in grants
- Reauthorize the Title XVI-WIIN Water Reclamation and Reuse Competitive Grants Program at \$100 million per year
- Reauthorize U.S. EPA’s Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants at \$75 million per year
- Reauthorize and provide increased funding for the Water Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act program
- Provide \$20 million for the U.S. EPA National Priorities Water Research Grant Program
- Reauthorize and provide increased funding for the U.S. EPA Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant program
- Provide \$18 million for the U.S. EPA’s National Priorities Water Technical Assistance Program
- Reauthorize and increase funding for the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grants Program created in WRDA 2018

- Ensure that local ratepayers do not bear the costs of remediating PFAS, as well as ensure that policies that analyze and regulate PFAS follow an evidence and risk-based assessment process as established in the Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act, and that EPA moves as expeditiously as possible in making its regulatory determinations
- Reauthorize U.S. EPA's Drinking Water System Resilience and Sustainability Program and expand eligibility to include all drinking water and wastewater systems nationwide
- Ensure U.S. EPA updates its Affordability Guidance with a methodology that better assesses household affordability and community financial capability to more accurately reflect the true affordability of all water services
- Provide strong funding for state drinking water and clean water programs including the Public Water System Supervision Grant and Clean Water Act Sec. 106 Grants.

A forthcoming poll to be released during Water Week by the Value of Water Campaign will show that 84 percent of American voters want state and federal leaders to invest in water infrastructure. For the fifth year in a row, the annual Value of Water Index will show that support for water infrastructure investment cuts across demographic, political, and geographic divisions.

The public clean water sector, as well as its research institutions and utilities would like to thank Senator John Boozman; Congressman and Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Peter DeFazio; Congressman John Katko; and Congressman Jared Huffman for taking part in this year's Water Week webinar. A special thanks is also extended to Congressman Dan Kildee for his message of support and encouragement to the sector for the heroic efforts of its workers in providing access to clean water over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. These Members of Congress have acted as champions of clean water, and the sector looks forward to continuing to work with them during Water Week 2020 and beyond.

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### About WEF

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 35,000 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](http://www.wef.org).

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