

Guardrails Without Gridlock: Lessons from El Paso Water's Direct Potable Reuse Project

WLI 2026 | Circular Water Economy
Ethics & Governance

Speaker: Christian Ramirez

Additional Team
Members:

- Chris Biggerstaff
- Rebecca Culhane
- Aaron Kirkland
- Brenda Ponton
- Caroline Williams



Build Trust Before Approval

Trust is not an afterthought. It is part of the approval pathway.

How El Paso built trust

Public Education

Began long before construction



Customer Readiness

Surveys helped prove support



Employee Ambassadors

Staff explained the project clearly



Create Long-Term Decision Structure

Innovation needs leadership. It also needs a structure that can survive leadership changes.

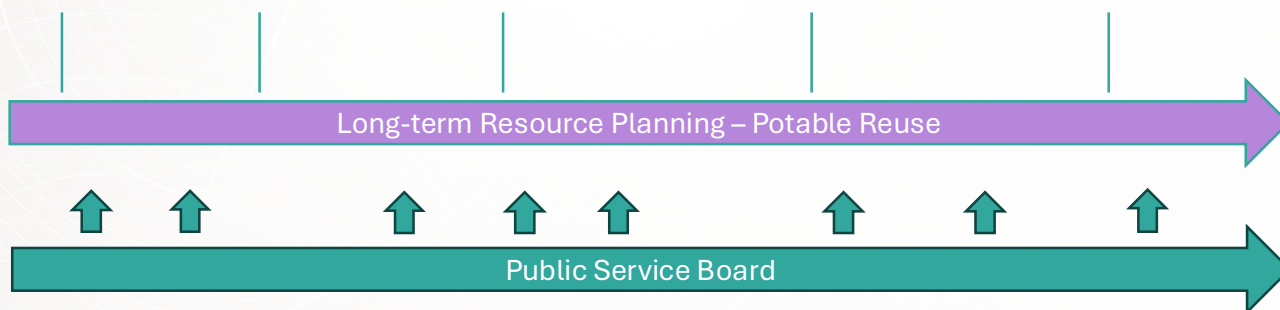
1952
Public Service
Board
Established

1960's
Reuse for
irrigation

1985
First indirect
potable
reuse

2012 - 2015
DPR planning
starts

2028
DPR Construction
Completes



Bring Regulators in Early

El Paso built the guardrails early.
Approval came through trust, data, and coordination.



Thank you to Gilbert Trejo, Vice President of Operations and Technical Services at El Paso Water, and the rest of the El Paso Water Team for sharing your story with us!

