

June 22, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H-305, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-221, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy  
Minority Leader  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Room H-204, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Minority Leader  
United States Senate  
Room S-230, The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leaders McCarthy and McConnell:

With the current drought already impacting [over 90 million people in the U.S.](#)<sup>1</sup>, and with water scarcity likely to get worse because of population growth and climate change, there is an urgent need for the federal government to increase its investment in water efficiency. The undersigned organizations respectfully request that you include at least \$10 billion for water efficiency and conservation grants in any infrastructure legislation approved by Congress to help communities and local water address the nation's water crisis.

- In the Western U.S., drought conditions mean thousands of farmers have lost water for their crops, developers report paying high prices to bring water to new homes or cannot get a water permit at all, and fish are struggling to survive in shrunken rivers.
- This threat goes well beyond the West. 30 states are currently experiencing moderate to severe drought<sup>1</sup>. [33 states have been hit by drought since 2000](#)<sup>2</sup>, including ones located in the Great Plains, Midwest, Southeast, and Mid-Atlantic regions. And [scientists warn](#)<sup>3</sup> that most of country is on pace to experience water shortages if we don't manage water better.

Water efficiency not only helps ensure access to clean, affordable water amidst a changing climate, it also:

- Tackles the root cause of climate change. That's because water-saving strategies reduce the amount of energy used to heat, pump, and treat water, which in turn reduces emissions of heat-trapping carbon dioxide.
- Protects our rivers, bays, and aquifers by limiting water withdrawals.
- Saves consumers money. Water efficient plumbing products can save an average family hundreds of dollars each year<sup>4</sup>. This is especially important today with COVID leaving millions of Americans unable to pay water bills.
- Supports economic growth. Every \$1 billion directly invested in water efficiency is also estimated to<sup>5</sup>:
  - Increase economic output between \$2.5 and \$2.8 billion dollars
  - Grow GDP \$1.3 to \$1.5 billion dollars
  - Add between 12,000 and 26,000 jobs

Between 1995 to 2020, the U.S. population grew by 63.2 million people<sup>6</sup> and yet public water withdrawals over that same period remained essentially unchanged. Water use efficiency policies and programs have been the most reliable water supply strategies, allowing millions of people to be served using the same volume of water.<sup>7</sup> But much of the “low hanging fruit” for water savings have now been achieved. Continuing and extending water savings for the next 25 years is essential and will require a real investment.

However, the cost of ensuring reliable water supplies falls primarily to local water agencies that can be cash-strapped in the best of times, not to mention now with the pandemic leaving many customers unable to pay their bills. The federal government pays less than five percent of the cost for drinking water and waste water, according to the [National Association of Clean Water Agencies](#)<sup>8</sup>, relying instead on loans to local communities.

The federal government has made significant investments in energy efficiency (EE) and renewable energy (RE) over the years, which has helped our nation respond to energy crises, cut emissions, and save billions of dollars. Unfortunately, parallel investments have not been made in water efficiency and water reuse despite the increasingly urgent need to conserve water. Between 2000 and 2020, federal EERE investments dwarfed federal investments in water efficiency and water reuse by a ratio of approximately 80 to 1<sup>9</sup>.

The undersigned organizations respectfully recommend that you include at least \$10 billion for water efficiency and conservation grants in any infrastructure legislation approved by Congress, so that the federal government can help communities and local water providers invest in the most immediate, cost-effective and environmentally beneficial ways to address the nation’s water crisis.

The climate is changing, droughts are getting worse, and water supplies are increasingly at risk. As Congress works on the nation’s infrastructure needs, we urge you to meet these challenges by supporting an ambitious and overdue federal investment in water efficiency and water conservation.

Sincerely,

Alliance for Water Efficiency  
International Association of Plumbing & Mechanical Officials  
Plumbing Manufacturers International  
City of Bend, OR  
City of Flagstaff, AZ  
City of Westminster, CO  
City of Chicago Water Department  
Southern Nevada Water Authority  
UC Davis – Center for Water-Energy Efficiency  
Connecticut Water  
Central Basin (CA) Municipal Water District  
Scottsdale (AZ) Water  
Flume  
City of Sacramento, CA  
Nipomo (CA) Community Services District  
City of Roseville, CA  
City of Mesa, AZ

City of Avondale, AZ  
Northwest Water & Energy Education Institute  
Water Demand Management, LLC  
Aquos Pools  
Irrigreen  
Rogue Water, LLC  
Purlin, LLC  
T&S Brass and Bronze Works, Inc.  
Dickinson Associates  
CA State Water Resources Control Board  
SCV Water (CA)  
Marin Water (CA)  
Monte Vista Water District (CA)  
Arizona Municipal Water Users Association  
California Water Service  
International Code Council  
Municipal Water District of Orange County (CA)  
South Tahoe Public Utility District (CA)

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.drought.gov/current-conditions>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.drought.gov/news/how-drought-prone-your-state-look-top-states-and-counties-drought-over-last-two-decades>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.nationalgeographic.com/science/article/partner-content-americas-looming-water-crisis>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.epa.gov/watersense/statistics-and-facts>

<sup>5</sup> Mitchell, D. et. al. 2017. Transforming Water: Water Efficiency as Infrastructure Investment. Alliance for Water Efficiency. Chicago, IL

<sup>6</sup> United States' resident population 1980-2020, Published by Statista Research Department, Jan 20, 2021;  
<https://www.statista.com/statistics/183457/united-states--resident-population/>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.usgs.gov/mission-areas/water-resources/science/public-supply-water-use>,  
<https://www.waterrf.org/research/projects/residential-end-uses-water-version-2>, <https://index.flumewater.com/>

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.affordableh2o.org/#about-the-campaign>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.allianceforwaterefficiency.org/resources/analysis-federal-funding-2000-2020>