

## Water Sector Coordinating Council



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# WSCC

June 1, 2007

Dear Colleague:

I am writing to you today regarding the release of the *Water Sector Specific Plan (SSP)* which outlines goals and objectives for water and wastewater (water sector) utilities, government entities, and other partners regarding security and emergency response issues for the nation. Water sector utilities are continually faced with providing clean and safe water as an integral part of daily life. Meeting this challenge has only increased with the recent focus on security and emergency response issues, all in an effort to assure the economic vitality of, and public confidence in, the Nation's drinking water and wastewater services. While water sector utilities continue to take the lead on these issues, utilities cannot do this alone. Partnership with all levels of government, as well as associations and other interested parties, is essential in protecting public health and the environment at the level all of us have come to expect.

A model for this partnership is detailed in the National Infrastructure Protection Plan (NIPP) ([www.dhs.gov/nipp](http://www.dhs.gov/nipp)) which sets forth a comprehensive risk management framework and defines roles and responsibilities for the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), other Federal, State, local, tribal, and private sector security partners. The Water SSP supports the overarching goals of the NIPP and represents a true partnership between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), DHS, state agency's, and water sector utilities. Specifically, the plan outlines four goals for the sector to drive development of protective programs and measures of success: sustain protection of public health and the environment; recognize and reduce risks; maintain a resilient infrastructure; and increase communication, outreach, and public confidence.

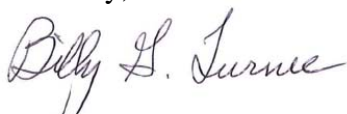
Water sector utilities have competing priorities for resources. Decisions on how to allocate precious resources for utility services, whether made by the utility, local government officials or a board of directors are always difficult. As these budget allocation decisions are made, it is very important to consider security and emergency response issues as part of the overall business operation plan of a water sector utility and we hope the Water SSP helps in making these tough decisions.

It is also important to note that the implementation of the Water SSP goals and objectives are already underway. A council of senior water and wastewater utility managers from utilities of all sizes, both rural and urban, meets regularly to advise DHS and EPA on issues of importance to the sector. The Water Sector Coordinating Council (WSCC) endorses the Water SSP (see letter in the SSP) and many initiatives supporting the Water SSP are underway. All of these initiatives are designed to promote the voluntary integration of security and emergency response issues into day to day business operations of water sector utilities. Specifically, the Council is working with DHS and EPA on establishing priorities and measures of success for the security and emergency response programs for the sector and across all sectors. In addition to the initiatives mentioned in the endorsement letter, the Council is working with DHS on water sector specific guidance for pandemic flu preparedness and is working with EPA on addressing the decontamination of wastewater after a terrorist attack. Updates on these efforts will be available later this year.

Also, while many other sectors depend on the services provided by the water sector, the water sector is dependent upon many other sectors (i.e. fire, power, transportation, etc.) in order to complete our responsibilities. This interdependency concept is central to ensuring a quicker response to incidents of national concern and to ultimately save lives. Finally, many of you may be familiar with Water and Wastewater Agency Response Networks (WARNs) which provide a framework for utilities to assist utilities impacted by an emergency. We encourage you to participate in this important effort.

The WSCC is working on these initiatives, and many others and we would like you to be aware that there is an avenue for you to share your comments and concerns as this partnership model with the federal government evolves. Utilities are ultimately responsible for the continuity of water and wastewater services across this nation and we thank you for your attention to these important efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Billy G. Turner".

Billy G. Turner  
Chair, Water Sector Coordinating Council and  
President, Columbus Water Works, Columbus, GA