SUPPORT INCREASED FEDERAL FUNDING FOR WATER QUALITY RESEARCH

Water quality research leads to solutions that protect human and ecological health, foster new water quality management processes and spear-head the development of new technologies. In times when federal spending on wastewater infrastructure continues to fall in real and inflation adjusted terms (as documented by the Congressional Budget Office - CBO), research also provides one of the few means to control or reduce the staggering costs of essential wastewater utility infrastructure upgrades, which by some estimates approaches $500 billion over the next twenty years.

WERF, WEF and NACWA Members/Subscribers produce and utilize critical water quality research in areas like wastewater infrastructure management, wet weather (runoff) control, biosolids handling, climate change adaptation, nutrient removal, green infrastructure, and the recovery of energy from wastewater.

Support Greater Funding for Water Quality Research

We believe that there is much more work to be done, and that Congress should increase its investment in water quality research. Accordingly, we support:

- Congressional language in the FY 2015 Appropriations Committee, Interior and Environment Subcommittee bill that funds an EPA-managed research program, outside of the STAR grant program, for nonprofits which conduct wastewater and water research of national significance.
- The return of direct Congressional investments in water quality research. For many years water quality researchers received federal funding through the appropriations process, investments which were leveraged at a 3:1 or better rate with monies largely from local wastewater treatment facilities. This highly successful public/private partnership should be restarted and expanded.
- Consideration of an order of magnitude increase in federal water quality research funding. One model to look to is the Department of Energy's Advanced Research Projects Agency-Energy (ARPA-E), which promotes high-potential, high-impact energy technologies that are not quite ready for private-sector investment. By empowering America's water quality researchers with similar funding, technical assistance, and market readiness support, an "ARPA-W[ater]" could have similarly far–reaching impacts to U.S. economic prosperity, national security, and environmental well-being.

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The National Water Policy Forum & Fly-In is the anchor event of WaterWeek 2014