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June 3, 2021

The Honorable Kathy Castor  
Chair, House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis

Dear Congresswoman Castor,

We write to thank you for your leadership as Chair of the House Select Committee on the Climate Crisis, and to urge your support for water recycling as a climate resiliency tool.

WateReuse Florida is the state section of the WateReuse Association, which represents nearly 250 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 200 businesses and organizations that advocate for programs and policies to support water recycling.

WateReuse Florida represents industry and communities throughout the State of Florida, working with private companies, municipalities and local professionals to promote and explore the beneficial reuse of water. Though much of our state receives an average of 50 or more inches of rain per year, more than 75% of our water supply comes from groundwater, and the availability of additional fresh groundwater is becoming limited in many areas of the state. Floridians currently utilize nearly 6.5 billion gallons of water per day and are projected to need an additional 1.1 billion gallons of water per day by 2035. Our continued growth, status as a world travel destination, and economic success depend on the identification of safe, sustainable alternative water supplies.

This past year our association has worked closely with State officials, academia, and the environmental community to help the State recognize highly treated reclaimed water as a source water for drinking. Many of our members are piloting different technologies to educate the public and demonstrate the safe and reliable use of recycled water. These programs are very costly and federal funding for these programs will provide your local constituents much needed sources of water to meet future needs without impacting the state's precious environmental water resources.

Water reuse, also known as water recycling, is the process of intentionally capturing wastewater, stormwater, saltwater or graywater and cleaning it as

needed for a designated beneficial freshwater purpose, such as drinking, industrial processes, irrigation, groundwater replenishment, and watershed restoration. The fundamental principle of water reuse is using the right water for the right purpose, everywhere and all the time. By advancing water reuse, we protect and enhance the environment while helping communities build resilience to drought, flooding, land subsidence, saltwater intrusion into groundwater, and other impacts of climate change.

We commend the Committee for recognizing the role of water recycling in its June 2020 *Action Plan*, which makes the following recommendations:

- Congress should increase the authorization and the funding cap for water recycling programs in the Bureau of Reclamation;
- Congress should increase funds to EPA programs that support community water supply resilience, including the Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability program, the design or construction of desalination facilities, and the implementation of projects to reclaim and reuse wastewater and stormwater runoff; and
- Congress should increase appropriations for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, and for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act Program.

WateReuse Florida supports these recommendations and urges their inclusion in upcoming legislation. This year, Congress has an opportunity to pass major infrastructure legislation in response to the Biden Administration's infrastructure proposal. WateReuse Florida supports strong investments in water recycling programs as part of an infrastructure package to help communities build resilience and mitigate the impacts of climate change.

More specifically, WateReuse Florida urges Congress to invest **at least \$100 million in direct spending in the Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants**. The Pilot Program for Alternative Water Source Grants enables the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to make competitive grants to state, interstate, and intrastate water resource development agencies to engineer, design, construct, and test alternative water source systems, including water reuse systems. The Pilot Program is reauthorized in both the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021 in the Senate, and the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021 in the House.

Investment in water reuse builds communities that are modern, sustainable and stable—ready for families to flourish and businesses to grow. We urge you to work with House leadership, committees of jurisdiction, and the Biden Administration to center water recycling as a climate resiliency tool in upcoming legislation. Thank you for considering our views.

Sincerely,

*Robert R. Beltran P.E.*

Robert Beltran, PE  
Florida WaterReuse President

CC:

Congressman Daniel Webster  
Congresswoman Frederica Wilson  
Congressman Brian Mast  
Congressman Carlos Gimenez