

**U.S. HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HOMELAND SECURITY
HEARING ON “CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE
PREPAREDNESS AND RESILIENCE: A FOCUS ON WATER”**



**TESTIMONY OF DAVID L. GADIS
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AUTHORITY**

**WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 2022, 10 A.M.
310 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING**

Chairman Thompson, Ranking Member Katko, and distinguished members of the Committee, I am David Gadis, CEO and General Manager of DC Water and a member of President Biden's National Infrastructure Advisory Council. Thank you for the opportunity to testify today on the resiliency of the nation's critical water infrastructure and the importance of making environmental justice and water equity part of that conversation.

As CEO of DC Water, I oversee a \$1 billion annual budget, a workforce of approximately 1,200 employees, the distribution of drinking water in the nation's capital, and the largest advanced wastewater treatment plant in the world that provides services for nearly 700,000 residents in Washington DC and another 1.6 million residents in neighboring counties in Maryland and Virginia. Since taking leadership in 2018, a goal of mine has been to lead transformative initiatives related to environmental justice and water equity including our first-in-class customer assistance programs and the Lead Free DC initiative, which will eliminate all lead service lines within the District by 2030.

As the recent water crisis in Jackson, Mississippi has highlighted, federal policy to secure the resilience of the nation's critical water infrastructure must include consideration of environmental justice and water equity, and climate change. As the funds for water investment are distributed from the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act*, we must be sure these resources are distributed on an equitable basis to all communities. In my role serving communities in DC who have often been overlooked for these investments in the past, I have a

unique vantage point on these issues and know that today's underinvestment is tomorrow's crisis.

Our primary mission at DC Water is to deliver clean, safe, and reliable drinking water to our residents. This includes protecting water and wastewater infrastructure from potential threats, including physical and cyber attacks. As part of this ongoing cyber resiliency effort, DC Water, as a member of the Water Sector National Cyber Security Taskforce, is partnering with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA), and Water Sector Coordinating Council (WSCC) to help develop recommendations for improving cyber security for the sector. Our cyber security model is based on the NIST cybersecurity framework. We limit access to physical facilities and data systems, have continuous monitoring and analysis of all our systems for potential threats, and are able to block attacks and maintain systems. Maintaining a strong cyber defense is just as much a part of our infrastructure as maintaining our pipes and filtration systems. Robust planning for cybersecurity is no longer optional in the water sector – it is a key part of what we do every day.

The federal government is a key partner in maintaining and upgrading our water infrastructure. For example, I'm pleased that last month FEMA announced a \$20 million grant for construction of a floodwall around the Blue Plains Wastewater Treatment Plant. This grant will help support resilience against predicted sea level rise, providing protection for a plant that serves over two million people in the District, Maryland, and Virginia.

Also, in my newly appointed role as the water utility expert on the President's National Infrastructure Advisory Council, I am looking forward to working with the White House on how to improve local and federal partnerships and improve the security and resilience of the nation's critical water infrastructure sector.

Further, the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA)* gives us an important initial investment in starting the process to restore our aging water and wastewater infrastructure. As we look to build long term resilience into this critical infrastructure, I would ask that Congress continue its commitment to grow this water infrastructure funding, as there is still much work to be done. For example, not all of the water infrastructure programs that were created in IIJA were actually funded. I ask that Congress fully fund ALL the water infrastructure programs that were authorized in IIJA in the FY23 Appropriations legislation—including two programs that would directly support both physical and cyber resiliency within the water sector: the Midsize and Large Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program; and the Clean Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Program.

In addition to increased, sustained federal funding, Congress has the ability to increase our resiliency by creating a secondary water source for National Capital region. Currently, DC Water is wholly reliant on the Potomac River as the source of our drinking water, and other local utilities in Maryland and Virginia are in the same position. In the event of an incident—from an

accidental chemical spill to a terrorist attack—our region has no good alternative water source. The first step to solving this problem is to authorize the US Army Corps of Engineers to study our best options. I want to thank the Members of the House of Representatives for their near-unanimous vote to authorize this study and ask that you urge your Senate colleagues to accept the House's provision in the final Water Resources Development Act later this year.

In my role with DC Water, I know that there are many challenges ahead. However, I also know these challenges can be met. The issues facing water utilities are not insurmountable but they are complex. Again, I thank you for inviting me to testify before you today, and I look forward to working with you to tackle these policy issues head-on.