

PRESS RELEASE

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Clean Water America Alliance Report Calls for Integrated National Water Policy

The Clean Water America Alliance (CWAA) released a report today calling for an integrated national water policy that will provide a more efficient and effective framework for addressing modern water resource challenges such as climate change, energy supply, and water sustainability. *A Call to Action: The Need for an Integrated National Water Policy* summarizes discussions from the CWAA's *National Dialogue*, held Sept. 14-15 in Washington, D.C, where diverse water sector leaders focused on a plan to create a sustainable urban water policy. The Dialogue brought together water policy experts from a broad range of sectors — academia, environmental activist groups, industry, and the public water and wastewater community — to discuss four key national issue areas:

- The nexus between climate change/energy and water — the production of energy requires large quantities of water, while the treatment and distribution of water demands more energy. Climate change will have significant impacts on both the energy and water sectors.
- The link between drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater — Billions of gallons of water are lost to aging collection and distribution systems, and the pressures on water supply will only increase along with population and average life spans. Keeping water in its place through water reuse will become more prevalent and necessary to address increasing demands.
- Green infrastructure — Innovative green infrastructure technologies that mimic nature's own hydrologic systems will help provide solutions to addressing wet weather challenges. Cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, and Seattle are leading the way.
- Watersheds — A greater focus on holistic approaches will help achieve water sustainability by addressing challenges on a watershed basis. But first, it is imperative to break down the regulatory, statutory, and jurisdictional barriers.

"Fragmented laws, policies, and organizations, at the federal, state, and local levels, and a stovepipe mentality are interfering with progress in achieving sustainable solutions to water issues," the CWAA report said, adding that the value of water needs to be better understood and appreciated.

The report points to the profound impact water will have on the development of domestic energy sources and vice versa. One goal is to increase awareness of how much water is needed to produce energy. "A water footprint should be calculated for energy projects, much like the carbon footprint to better judge the costs of any particular project," the report said.

Coordinating water quality laws and policies with those related to water quantity also pose significant challenges to water resource managers. The report calls for compiling a “comprehensive water census/inventory” before “meaningful progress can be made in integrating water quality/quantity planning.”

The report touts the importance of green infrastructure technologies, not just as a stormwater management technique, but as a “multi-dimensional, integrating force which brings in concepts such as ecosystem services to help manage urban water.” Green infrastructure will play a key role in helping achieve water quality goals. The importance of new technologies more broadly was at the forefront of these discussions.

Finally, the report promotes watershed planning as a critical component for effectively managing water resources. “Watersheds exemplify our common ownership of water and our inherent interdependence,” the report said. “One of the biggest challenges is that political boundaries and watersheds usually don’t coincide...It is not simply planning that will serve as the solution; we also need integrated monitoring, permitting and enforcement on a watershed basis.”

The National Dialogue concluded that much work needs to be done to address 21st century challenges and that the nation is at a turning point. The Clean Water America Alliance is poised to serve as the perfect forum for keeping the conversation going and educating policymakers and the public about the need for an integrated approach for water resource management and encouraging innovative thinking and technologies to achieve those goals.

To download the report and learn more about the Clean Water America Alliance, please visit <http://www.cleanwateramericaalliance.org/pdfs/2009-11-16report.pdf>.

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The CWAA is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that brings together the brightest minds in the clean water community to explore the complex issue of water sustainability and plan for the future by improving public awareness and advancing holistic, watershed-based approaches to water quality and quantity challenges.

Imagine a world where water is viewed, managed, and valued as one resource — a world where the silo thinking that has kept clean water, drinking water, stormwater, and water reuse interests segregated erodes away. What flows out is a movement toward meeting future challenges on a watershed basis, with a focus on sustainability and green cities. Changing the water paradigm – this is the vision of the Clean Water America Alliance.

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