National Blue Ribbon Commission for Onsite Non-potable Water Systems

Convened by:

US Water Alliance | WERF | Water Research Foundation

Fact Sheet

National Blue Ribbon Commission for Onsite Non-potable Water Systems advances best management practices to support the use of onsite non-potable water systems for individual buildings or at the local scale. We are committed to protecting public health and the environment, and sustainably managing water—now and for future generations.

Context

As water supplies become more strained, climate change persists, and populations grow, communities are looking for new ways to develop and manage local water supplies and increase the resiliency of water infrastructure. Onsite water systems collect wastewater, stormwater, rainwater, and more, and treat it so that it can be reused in a building, or at the local scale for non-potable needs such as irrigation, toilet flushing, and cooling. These systems are usually integrated into the city's larger water and wastewater system and contribute to a more resilient and sustainable water management by using alternate water sources, reducing valuable potable water used for non-potable purposes, and minimizing strain on wastewater systems.

Despite growing interest in incorporating onsite non-potable water systems to meet broader One Water goals, a lack of public health-based state or national standards, streamlined permitting processes, and regulatory guidance for ONWS has created barriers to implementation. The National Blue Ribbon Commission is focused on creating tools and resources that can support implementation of this sustainable water strategy and foster strong collaborations between water and wastewater utilities and public health agencies to ensure projects protect public health and meet water quality standards.

The National Blue Ribbon Commission builds upon years of work beginning in 2012 by several municipalities, water utilities, public health officials, the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation, the Water Research Foundation, and the US Water Alliance.

Commission Goals

The National Blue Ribbon Commission is a partnership between the US Water Alliance, the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation, and the Water Research Foundation. It is chaired by the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. The goals of the commission are to:

- Serve as a forum for collaboration and knowledge exchange on the policies, best management practices, procedures, and standards for onsite water systems for non-potable purposes;
- Craft guidance and model policies that establish a framework for water quality criteria, monitoring and reporting requirements, and operational and permitting strategies that are based on risk-based science and honor local context;
- Develop case making resources for water utilities based on best practices and lessons learned in the design, development, integration, and operation of ONWS to demonstrate how these systems can help utilities meet their One Water goals;
- Identify and develop a research agenda to further advance the field of onsite non-potable water systems.

Commissioners

The commission is comprised of 33 representatives from municipalities, water utilities and public health agencies from 11 states and the District of Columbia.

Chair

Paula Kehoe, Director of Water Resources, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Commissioners

Scott Abbott, Manager, Bureau of Environmental Protection, County of Los Angeles Public Health

Hardeep Anand, Deputy Director of Capital Improvement Programs, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department

Anita Anderson, Principal Engineer, Minnesota Department of Health

Julienne Bautista, Environmental Engineer, District of Columbia Department of Energy & Environment

Brian Bernados, Senior Engineer and Technical Specialist, California State Water Resources Control Board

Brian Davis, Senior Engineer, Metropolitan Council, Environmental Services

Steve Deem, Regional Engineer, Washington State Department of Health

Ron Doughten, Water Quality Permit Program Manager, Oregon Department of Environmental Quality

Jon Eaton, Superintendent of Utilities, City of Eagan, Minnesota

Jessica Edwards-Brandt, Director of Water Quality & Technology, DC Water

Mamdouh El-Aarag, Environmental Engineer, Wastewater Management, Washington State Department of Health

Samir Elmir, Division Director, Environmental Health and Engineering, Miami-Dade County Health Department

Jay Garland, Division Director, Office of Research and Development, US Environmental Protection Agency

Bertha Goldenberg (retired), Assistant Director for Planning and Regulatory Compliance, Miami-Dade Water and Sewer Department

Brian Good, Chief Administrative Officer, Denver Water

Charles Graf, Principal Hydrogeologist, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality

Bret Icenogle, Engineering Section Manager, Water Quality Control Division, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment

Mark Jaeger, InterAgency Project Coordination, Seattle Public Utilities

David Lipsky, Senior Policy Advisor, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Josina Morita, Commissioner, Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago

Sina Pruder, Engineering Program Manager, Hawaii State Department of Public Health—Wastewater Branch

Melinda Rho, Manager of Water Quality Regulatory Affairs, Los Angeles Department of Water and Power

Genevieve Salmonson, Compliance Assistance Ombudsman, Hawaii State Department of Public Health

Neal Shapiro, Senior Sustainability Analyst and Watershed Management Program Coordinator, City of Santa Monica, California

Robert Stefani, Conservation Program Specialist, Austin Water Utility

Wing Tam, Assistant Director of Watershed Programs, LA Sanitation, City of Los Angeles

Jacqueline Taylor, Director of Bureau of Environmental Protection, County of Los Angeles Public Health

Barry Usagawa, Program Administrator, Water Resources Division, Honolulu Board of Water Supply

Chris Wanner, Director of Operations, Portland Water Bureau

June Weintraub, Manager of Water, Noise, and Medical Cannabis Regulatory Programs, San Francisco Department of Public Health

National Program Partners & Commissioners

Radhika Fox, Chief Executive Officer, US Water Alliance

Melissa Meeker, Chief Executive Officer, Water Environment & Reuse Foundation

Rob Renner, Chief Executive Officer, Water Research Foundation

Commission Guiding Principles

The National Blue Ribbon Commission is guided by the following principles:

- **Protect public health.** In order to secure a sustainable water future, we need diverse approaches to water management. In all of the work we do, we are committed to protecting public health and ensuring safe, secure, and reliable water use and reuse.
- **Develop science-based policy.** As the commission develops policy recommendations and guidance, it will be driven by risk-based science and research.
- **Utilize a consensus-based approach.** If we align our diverse experiences and expertise, we can achieve the best outcomes. The commission will seek consensus across all of the work we do together.
- **Integrate best practices.** The work of the commission is informed by the best practices in the management, operations, and oversight of onsite non-potable water systems.
- **Honor local context.** The commission sees great value in the development of policy and business models to support the effective adoption of onsite non-potable water systems. At the same time, the commission recognizes and respects that policy and program implementation will vary based on needs and context at the local and state level.
- **Commit to continuous learning.** As the adoption of onsite non-potable water systems is evolving, the commission is committed to staying abreast of new science and new approaches. We are inclusive of input from interested stakeholders as we learn together.

To learn more about the National Blue Ribbon Commission, visit: **www.uswateralliance.org**

US Water Alliance

About the US Water Alliance

The US Water Alliance is dedicated to advancing policies and programs to secure a sustainable water future for all. Established in 2008, the Alliance is a nationally-recognized nonprofit organization which educates the nation on the true value of water and the need for investment, accelerates the adoption of one water policies and programs, and celebrates innovation in water management. The Alliance brings together diverse interests to identify and advance common-ground, achievable solutions for our nation's most pressing water challenges. Our membership includes water providers, public officials, business leaders, environmental organizations, community leaders, policy organizations, and more.

WATER ENVIRONMENT & REUSE FOUNDATION WE&RF

About the Water Environment & Reuse Foundation

The Water Environment & Reuse Foundation (WE&RF) is a 501c3 charitable corporation seeking to identify, support, and disseminate research that enhances the quality and reliability of water for natural systems and communities with an integrated approach to resource recovery and reuse; while facilitating interaction among practitioners, educators, researchers, decision makers, and the public.

Water Research Foundation®

About the Water Research Foundation

Water Research Foundation (WRF) is a non-profit research cooperative that advances the science of water to protect public health and the environment. Governed by utilities, WRF delivers scientifically sound research solutions and knowledge to serve our subscribers and stakeholders in all areas of drinking water, wastewater, stormwater, and reuse. WRF has funded and managed more than 1,500 research studies from asset management to treatment, utility finance to resource management, conveyance systems to water quality.