



# BUSINESS FOR WATER

STEWARDSHIP

## WATER POLICY PRIORITIES & PRINCIPLES

During the 2016 Business of Water summit, members of the business community helped develop a set of water policy priorities and principles designed to reduce business risk and provide water for economic, community and environmental benefits. The underlying objective of these principles is to empower the business community to guide the development of sound water policies at the local, state, and regional level needed to sustain thriving economies in the West, maximize community livability and sustain healthy river flows. Recognizing that different geographic areas will require region-specific policies that meet local needs and circumstances, we invite business associations, Chambers of Commerce, and individual businesses to adopt and advocate for some or all of the following priorities as they engage in decision-making processes about water policy at the local, state, regional and federal levels.



### CONSERVATION & EFFICIENCY

While major gains in water conservation and water-use efficiency have been realized over the past decades, significant opportunities remain and will be needed to assure business resilience, economic development and water security in the face of drought, a changing climate, and population growth.

- Support the development of efficiency standards for the commercial, industrial, and agricultural sectors based on new and emerging water efficiency technologies.
- Advocate for practices that incentivize, encourage or facilitate using some conserved water to meet social and environmental needs that could include instream flows or water for recreation.
- Support coordinated and adequate state and federal financing of effective water conservation programs such as WaterSMART and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program and ensure that criteria for such programs prioritize projects with multiple benefits that include habitat, rivers, and outdoor recreation.



### WATER REUSE & RECYCLING

Water recycling and reuse are most common in communities that face limited water supplies. In the U.S., only about 6-8 percent of our water is being reused. Significant opportunities exist to expand social, economic, and environmental benefits derived from water reuse.

- Support incentives such as tax credits, low-interest loans, and financing for installation of water reuse and recycling technologies and systems.
- Support removal of administrative barriers and streamlining of regulations and permitting processes for water reuse/ recycling projects—especially for direct, potable reuse and graywater—and for projects that will allow more water to stay in rivers to benefit nature, recreation and quality of life.



## FLEXIBLE WATER MANAGEMENT

Businesses need flexibility to adjust to changing conditions in water supply and to meet new demands efficiently and cost effectively. Sound approaches and policies governing water transfers, banking and trading are needed to provide that flexibility. In addition, market-based approaches to water management can play a critical role in protecting environmental flows, helping ensure the long-term health of ecosystems, and sustaining the viability of Western communities and economies.

- Expand and encourage both public and private funding of and participation in water banks, exchanges, and creative water transfers and sharing mechanisms. Promote jurisdiction-specific demonstration projects.
- Incentivize and encourage, particularly at the state level, the donation or voluntary lease or sale of water rights to benefit instream flows, recreation, and protection of environmental values while retaining certainty of private water rights and mitigating issues associated with outdated “use it or lose it” provisions that can discourage conservation and preclude the use of water to sustain recreation and environmental values.
- Support efforts to streamline and refine water transfer, leasing and banking programs, provide certainty in the regulatory process to minimize the costs of water transfers, protect environmental and community benefits, and reduce adverse effects to rural communities, and improve interagency coordination.



## ANALYSIS, UTILIZATION & COMMUNICATION OF WATER INFORMATION

The business community needs access to accurate, timely, and synthesized data to understand current conditions, identify sustainability problems and business risks, illuminate possible solutions, and adapt to changing conditions over time. Critical obstacles to sustainable water management include the lack of accessible water data and a lack of standards around information transparency. New tools and vehicles that support effective communication of information are also needed to support fact-based decision making for business and non-business communities.

- Support efforts to compile, make accessible, and improve technologies for analysis and visualization of water information that will result in informed water management decisions.
- Support initiatives to collect and monitor water usage, develop benchmarks, and test innovative solutions that will improve decision making and facilitate prioritization of water-related investments.
- Support efforts that enhance transparent communications between water managers, decision makers and private-sector water users.

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*For examples/samples of policies being implemented in various geographies related to these priorities and principles, please visit: <http://businessforwater.org/advocate>*