



PRESS RELEASE



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Metropolitan, Water Authority Join Other Major U.S. Water Agencies to Form New National Climate Alliance

Collaboration and improved research key to coping with climate change

United by the fact that climate change poses a major long-term challenge to delivering high-quality drinking water, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California and the San Diego County Water Authority joined some of the nation's largest water agencies today in announcing the formation of an unprecedented coalition, the Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA). The alliance will work to improve research into the impacts of climate change on water utilities, develop strategies for adapting to climate change and implement tactics to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions.

Comprised of eight of the nation's largest water providers—Metropolitan, the Water Authority, Denver Water, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Portland Water Bureau, the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Seattle Public Utilities and the Southern Nevada Water Authority—the WUCA members supply drinking water for more than 36 million people throughout the United States.

“The size and breadth of the agencies participating in this alliance demonstrate the serious consideration the water industry throughout the nation is giving to the impacts of climate change,” said Metropolitan General Manager Jeff Kightlinger. “The threat of climate change upon the nation's water supplies demands forward-thinking, collaborative approaches that can only be achieved through partnerships like WUCA.”

“Climate change is expected to have a significant impact on already challenged water supplies in Southern California and throughout the nation,” said Maureen Stapleton, general manager of the San Diego County Water Authority. “This alliance will foster greater coordination of local and national strategies addressing climate change that will help us continue to provide reliable water supplies to our region.”

Susan Leal, general manager of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, which chairs the WUCA, said water utilities are among the first responders to the effects of climate change. “Our systems are facing risk due to diminishing snowpack, bigger storms, more frequent drought and rising sea levels. We need to be organized to respond to these risks—that's why we've formed this alliance,” Leal said.

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In its first official act, the WUCA provided comment today on the “Summary of Revised Research Plan” prepared by the U.S. Climate Change Science Program (CCSP).

The WUCA identified several key research needs that would improve the drinking water industry’s ability to develop strategies to cope with potential impacts of climate change. The WUCA is urging the CCSP, as well as all researchers and scientists in the climate-change field to:

- Reduce the uncertainty in projections related to how the climate may change by improving and refining global climate models and applying them at the regional or local level;
- Enhance the collection, maintenance and accessibility of information, making the data more useful for decision-making purposes;
- Ensure that water providers worldwide have access to consistent climate data;
- Develop decision-support tools for planning, decision-making and policy-making that can accommodate deep uncertainty and the potential for abrupt climate changes; and
- Coordinate international research efforts, particularly with those countries that are already experiencing the effects of climate change, such as Australia.

The CCSP integrates federal research on climate and global change. It is comprised of 13 federal agencies with climate change research responsibilities, including the Departments of Interior, Commerce, and Energy, NASA, and the Environmental Protection Agency. The CCSP’s “Summary of Revised Research Plan” is available online at www.climate-science.gov/Library/stratplan2008/.

For more information about the WUCA, or to review comments of the “Summary of Revised Research Plan,” visit **www.sfwater.org**.

The Water Utility Climate Alliance is dedicated to providing leadership and collaboration on climate-change issues affecting drinking water utilities by improving research, developing adaptation strategies and creating mitigation approaches to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

The Water Utility Climate Alliance began meeting in late 2007 and includes the following members and their respective agencies:

Susan Leal, WUCA chair and general manager, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission

Maureen Stapleton, general manager, San Diego County Water Authority

Chips Barry, general manager, Denver Water

Chuck Clarke, director, Seattle Public Utilities

Jeff Kightlinger, general manager, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

Emily Lloyd, commissioner, New York City Department of Environmental Protection

Patricia Mulroy, general manager, Southern Nevada Water Authority

David Shaff, administrator, Portland Water Bureau

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