

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **AwwaRF Announces Strategic Initiative to Research Climate Change's Effect on the Nation's Drinking Water Supply**

DENVER — The Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF), the nation's leading drinking water research organization, announced a strategic initiative that will immediately allocate \$500,000 to fund ongoing research on how climate change is affecting the quality and quantity of the public's drinking water supply.

“AwwaRF is committing to a sustained, multi-year approach to evaluating climate change so we may ultimately provide solutions to the challenges that climate change presents to our nation's drinking water suppliers,” said Robert C. Renner, AwwaRF executive director.

AwwaRF's strategic initiative was precipitated by a two-day climate change workshop in early January hosted by AwwaRF and co-sponsored by the Water Environment Research Foundation (WERF) and the UK Water Industry Research Association (UKWIR). Attendees included climate change experts and water utility representatives and managers from the U.S., the U.K., Canada, and Australia.

## **Climate Change Workshop Objectives and Outcomes**

The objective of the international workshop was to identify cooperative international research projects — spanning water, wastewater, and urban storm water — that will assist the water industry in planning for and managing dramatic variations in annual water supplies resulting from climate change.

The plenary session consisted of a summary from water industry representatives on climate change research and utility initiatives already in place to address the effects of climate change on water quality and quantity. Presenting representatives included Steve Whipp, United Utilities Water, representing UKWIR; Kevin Bradley, Water Corporation of Australia, representing Australian research activities; Chris Rayburn, AwwaRF; Dan Woltering, WERF; Erica Brown, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies; David Behar, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, representing the “Group of 8” utility initiative; and Mark LeChevallier, American Water.

Following the plenary session, workshop attendees formed working groups to identify the most pressing research needs in the areas of:

- Water quality – including impacts to quality, storage, conveyance and demand, treatment, and adaptation and management practices to protect and manage water quality.
- Water resources – including impacts on the hydrological cycle and adaptations in water resource planning.
- Infrastructure – including impacts of climate change on water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure.
- Energy and environment – including mitigation opportunities for greenhouse gas in water supply and wastewater treatment.
- Management and communications – including impacts on customers, utility managers, capital needs, and adaptations in communications.

As a result of these discussions, attendees identified more than 50 research needs and priorities, including the following highest-priority needs:

- Evaluating impacts of underground carbon dioxide on groundwater supplies

- Interpreting climate change models for water supply
- Designing infrastructure systems of the future
- Providing vulnerability assessment and risk management tools
- Optimizing resource recovery and integrated processes

“Thanks to a collaborative approach from water managers representing drinking water, wastewater, and storm water interests in North America, Europe, and Australia, we were able to identify the most pressing climate change research projects related to our industries,” Renner said. “Although the funds from AwwaRF’s strategic initiative will serve as important seed money, it will take a collaborative effort among drinking and wastewater subscribers and associations, their research partners, and the federal government to find the funding to ensure research on key climate change projects moves forward.”

#### **About the Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF)**

The Awwa Research Foundation (AwwaRF) is a member-supported, international, nonprofit organization that sponsors research to enable water utilities, public health agencies, and other professionals provide safe and affordable drinking water to the public. With more than 900 subscriber members in the U.S. and abroad, AwwaRF has funded and managed more than 1,000 projects valued at more than \$400 million. More information on the Awwa Research Foundation is available at [www.AwwaRF.org](http://www.AwwaRF.org) .

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