



## Imagine a Day Without Water: The Delaware River Basin

### The Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin Joins Sixth Annual “Imagine a Day Without Water” to Raise Awareness About the Value of Water

**October 21, 2020 – [Devon, PA]** – Today, the Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin (WRADRB) joined elected officials, water utilities, community leaders, educators, and businesses from across the country as part of the sixth annual **Imagine a Day Without Water**, a nationwide day of education about the value of water. Led by the Value of Water Campaign, a thousand organizations across the country raised awareness about not taking water for granted and the crucial need for investment in our nation’s water systems.

In the Delaware River Basin, challenges include low flows and drought, flooding, stormwater management and combined sewer overflows, metals from abandoned mines, plastics, nutrients, and sediment overload. The

After working around the clock for 100 years or more, water infrastructure is aging and failing.

Imagine a Day Without Water  
October 21, 2020 | #ValueWater



demands on the Delaware River system highlight the need to address these challenges. Over 13 million people rely on water from the basin for drinking, and a host of wildlife species, such as the Atlantic sturgeon, striped bass, and osprey, call the river and the surrounding watershed home. Businesses rely on the water, too. The northeastern US, of which the Delaware Basin is a substantial part, produces 20% of the nation’s Gross Domestic Product. From breweries to power production, pharmaceutical manufacturers to farmers, a day without

water would leave the basin more than thirsty. Many of the systems providing these services are aging; some of the pipes in Philadelphia, for example, date back to before the Civil War. A recent study by Utah State University found a [27% increase in water main breaks from 2012 to 2018](#) across the US.

WRADRB members lead the way in water infrastructure investment in the Delaware River Basin. The Philadelphia Water Department (PWD) is implementing a \$2.5 billion infrastructure improvement initiative to update, expand and improve aging systems. SUEZ invested \$60 million in its Delaware operations, including a treatment plant and storage system to enhance reliability while lowering carbon emissions with green pumps. Aqua Pennsylvania invested \$323 million in 2019, largely to replace aging water mains. This is a small sampling of the investment going into the basin. And yet, the need outstrips what one entity can do.

Recently, WRA held a forum with Kendra Morris of SUEZ and Bill Malarkey of Amane Advisors. One of the final comments of the panel pertained to the need for water infrastructure investment.

To meet infrastructure needs long term, we need “to take a more long-term orientation,” noted Bill. “People in the utility sector already have this. I am referring to long term vision on a policy level, understanding that it takes money to create or refurbish infrastructure. It will cost money. It may be up to local and regional leaders to do this.”

Federal leadership can make a difference. COVID will drive continued federal stimulus. “We hope,” said Bill, “that the stimulus includes an infrastructure component, and specifically a water component. We welcome infrastructure stimulus with long term focus.”

The Value of Water Campaign conducted a poll, using a bipartisan research team, to gauge voters support for water infrastructure funding and investment.

4 out of 5 of voters  
support increasing federal  
investment to rebuild  
our water infrastructure.

Imagine a Day Without Water  
October 21, 2020 | #ValueWater



Dave Metz, partner and president of Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz, and Associates (FM3), who helped to conduct the poll, said: "The COVID-19 crisis only sharpened public opinion about the need to keep people safe and healthy. Investments in water infrastructure that benefit public health are seen as critically important in this environment. The public also tends to see them as 'shovel-ready' investments that can create jobs and strengthen the economy." Full results from the survey can be found here. Highlights include:

- Without investment, water and wastewater systems will continue to deteriorate, leading to serious consequences for public health and the economy.
- Investing in water creates cascading economic benefits, strengthening American competitiveness, raising GDP, creating jobs and increasing wages. Addressing just one-half of US capital investment needs would create over 700,000 jobs, raise wages by \$2 trillion, and increase GDP by \$3.5 trillion.

Investment in our drinking water and wastewater systems is a pathway to economic recovery. Renewing our aging infrastructure will create jobs, protect public health, and avoid massive costs that will be inevitable if we allow these systems to continue to deteriorate.

“We're thrilled that the Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin is a part of Imagine a Day Without Water. This national day of action educates our neighbors and public officials about the essential role water plays in all our lives,” said Radhika Fox, CEO of the US Water Alliance and Director of the Value of Water Campaign. “This year showed us the critical importance of water service to safeguard public health and the economy. But the infrastructure and service it takes to bring water to our homes and businesses and take it away is not free and can't be taken for granted. We all need to educate ourselves about where our water comes from and the investment these critical systems need.”

Learn more at [imagineadaywithoutwater.org](https://imagineadaywithoutwater.org) and follow the conversation on social media at **#ValueWater**.

###

Skelly Holmbeck, Executive Director WRADRB | [ed@wradrb.org](mailto:ed@wradrb.org)

*The [Water Resources Association of the Delaware River Basin](https://www.wradrb.org/) unites water users throughout the Delaware River Basin to promote the science based, sustainable management of the Delaware River Basin.*

#### Media Contact

Abigail Gardner | [agardner@thevalueofwater.org](mailto:agardner@thevalueofwater.org)

[Imagine a Day Without Water](#) began in 2015 as a project of *The Value of Water Campaign*.

[The Value of Water Campaign](#) educates and inspires the nation about how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment. Spearheaded by top leaders in the water industry, the Value of Water Campaign is building public and political will for investment in America's water infrastructure. Follow the Value of Water Campaign on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#).