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WASTE WATER

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In February 2021, the US federal government put out a National Water Reuse Action Plan (WRAP).

It featured a list of 55 action items, ranging from federal to state and local levels.

I am the owner of one of those action items. My mission is to create a national award for a water reuse champion!

That idea emerged from the intention to get the corporate community engaged by incentivizing them through recognition.

From a policy standpoint, that's one of the four levers you can play with to promote greater water reuse:

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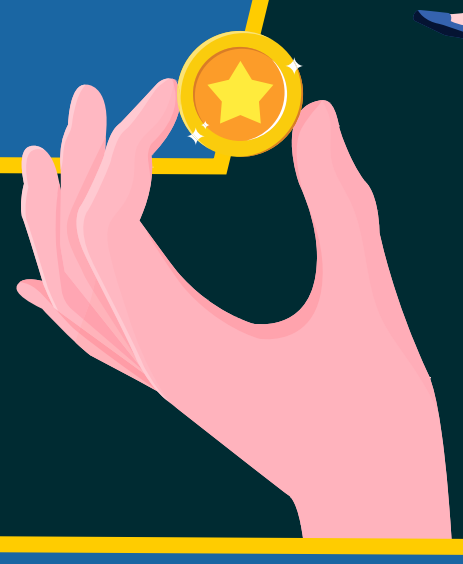
1. Education outreach

Under that umbrella, you can create reward and recognition programs - as we've just seen.

The federal government can also provide technical resources to communities

2. Incentives



Like any advanced treatment, water reuse has a cost, which you can help cover with grants and low-cost loans.

3. Remove adoption barriers

That's the second face of that same coin: you can raise the cost of the wrong behavior. If water is no longer available for next to nothing, reuse starts making much more sense!

4. Regulations

Beyond nudges and economic incentives or facilitation, you can "simply" enforce the proper conduct with laws and standards.

All of these would be interesting approaches, yet one may trump them all:

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The US government should put an investment tax credit in place to promote the industrial reuse of water exactly as it did for wind and solar energy.

But why do we need to reuse water at first?

Simple: because with water scarcity on the rise, it's probably the best source of water we have at hand.

Treating wastewater for reuse is cheaper than desalinating water. Plus, it's available and just sitting there!

If you recall David Lloyd Owen's estimate (S3E13), the World will need to cover about 10% of its water needs with reuse by 2030.

... that's 5x more than we do today!

So it's about time to deploy the right technologies in the right places and walk the talk.

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But the most efficient approach is probably to team-up:

The private sector will have to develop cost-efficient technologies and put the right business models in place. Then multilateral organizations, development agencies like the world bank, and governments will have to play their role!

We might soon have champions. But they will still need an army!

We also covered:

- How the US infrastructure bill will apply to the water sector, and what the $55 billion there will be allocated to
- How the scattered nature of the water utility scene in the US can prevent rapid actions from being taken
- How decentralized water reuse might be a powerful solution, and how the 50L Home coalition promotes this direction
- How Los Angeles intends to reuse 100% of its wastewater by 2035 and what it deploys to meet that goal
- How piloting reuse solutions goes beyond a pure technological assessment
- How water tariffs and their absence when it comes to river and groundwater are crucial influencers for the adoption of reuse
- Teaching at the university and the Wharton School, Creating an “H2O Shark Tank,” Membrane Bioreactors as a fundamental technological brick, the water usage mix, PFAS treatment, having aspirational goals… and much more!

Don’t miss a single bite: head over to dww.show!