



December 19, 2022

Secretary Deb Haaland
Department of Interior
1849 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20240

Re: GX22EN05ESBJF00 – Advisory Council for Climate Adaptation Science Establishment

Dear Secretary Haaland,

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) welcomes the opportunity to comment on the establishment of the Advisory Council for Climate Adaptation Science (Council), which will advise the Secretary of the Interior on the operations of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) National Climate Adaptation Science Center (NCASC) and its nine regional Climate Adaptation Science Centers (CASCs). AMWA represents the largest metropolitan, publicly owned drinking water systems in the nation. Collectively, AMWA's membership serves more than 156 million people – from Alaska to Puerto Rico – with safe drinking water. To do this, AMWA's member utilities must engage in planning that incorporates regional climate change impacts to water supply, treatment, and delivery. Our member utilities have specific research and management needs and therefore can benefit greatly from the science, management, and communications developed at the NCASC and regional CASCs.

AMWA urges USGS to prioritize the water sector in membership representation on the Council. The inclusion of representatives from water utilities will ensure that the priorities of the NCASC and regional CASCs reflect the perspective of key decisionmakers from one of the nation's critical infrastructure sectors. As regional and local decisionmakers on water resources, water utilities and their leaders have a vital role in conservation of our limited natural resources and a unique insight into the kinds of accessible data, research, and engagement opportunities that are necessary to help a critical infrastructure sector make the best uses of available climate adaptation science.

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As stewards of the environment and providers of critically important human health and safety resources, AMWA utilities take the global and climate change impacts seriously. Preparing for hazards and adapting to climate change is a particularly important issue for maintaining water system resilience. A strong federal research initiative is needed to ensure climate change adaptation research can effectively inform decisionmakers' efforts related to conserve drinking water and prepare for the effects of wildfires, drought, sea level rise, and other results of a changing climate on regional water supplies.

Many AMWA utilities are leaders in the field of climate change adaptation and take the opportunity to collaborate with other utilities to share how to incorporate climate change in their long-term operations and planning. The Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA) is an alliance of twelve water utilities, which are all AMWA members. WUCA provides leadership and collaboration to advance climate change adaptation, planning, and decision-making at water utilities. WUCA took the charge in the sector in 2021 by releasing a [report](#) on climate adaptation practices and case studies. USGS would be wise to look to reports like this and other efforts from water utilities to understand the benefits of including water utility representation on the Council.

AMWA supports the mission of the NCASC and regional CASCs to generate science and decision-making tools to help the nation respond to novel resource management challenges brought on by climate change. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and ask that the USGS fully prioritize representation from the nation's water utilities in the establishment of the Council. If you have any questions about this letter, please contact Jessica Evans, AMWA's Government Affairs Associate at evans@amwa.net.

Sincerely,



Thomas Dobbins
Chief Executive Officer

cc: David Applegate, USGS, Director
Janet Cushing, USGS, National Climate Adaptation Science Center