



MEDIA ADVISORY

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WUCA Releasing Two White Papers Featuring Climate Change Planning in Water Utilities

(St. Louis) On May 13, the Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA) will release two white papers in conjunction with the National Adaptation Forum featuring case studies of water utilities actively addressing climate change. These papers advance our understanding of how the relatively new enterprise of climate change assessment and adaptation practice is developing, and provide valuable feedback from the front lines of climate change planning to guide future investment in this rapidly growing field of inquiry.

1) Actionable Science in Practice: Co-Producing Climate Change Information for Water Utility Vulnerability Assessments. Final Report of the Piloting Utility Modeling Applications (PUMA) Project. Lead Author: Jason M. Vogel for the Water Utility Climate Alliance. 2015.

The Piloting Utility Modeling Applications (PUMA) project featured four water utilities (New York, Tampa Bay, Seattle, and Portland) who worked in collaboration with local climate science consortiums to hand-pick or develop locally appropriate tools, projections, and approaches to understand the impact of climate change on drinking water supplies. These utilities pursued customized approaches based on specific utility needs and learned important lessons in conducting assessments that may be of interest to the wider adaptation community. In addition, these projects attempted to create a “climate services” environment in which utility managers worked collaboratively and iteratively with climate scientists to understand both utility concerns and the ability or limitations of today’s climate science to respond to those concerns. These broader lessons that cut across the pilots are presented in a closing chapter entitled “Conclusions for an Applied Research Agenda for Climate Services.”

- 2) Embracing Uncertainty: A Case Study Examination of How Climate Change is Shifting Water Utility Planning. Lead Author: Karen Raucher for the Water Utility Climate Alliance and American Water Works Association. 2015.

Climate change has emerged as one of the greatest challenges facing water utilities planning for the future, adding a new source and level of complexity that is forcing many agencies to reexamine their decision-making processes. A significant barrier for many agencies is figuring out how to consider highly uncertain climate information and move away from deterministic thinking to make climate-informed decisions. To provide water professionals with practical and relevant information, the Water Utility Climate Alliance teamed with the American Water Works Association, in coordination with the Water Research Foundation and Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies, to develop a case study white paper sharing insights into how and why water agencies are modifying planning and decision-making processes. The 13 case studies presented illustrate the variety of ways in which utilities are incorporating climate change into planning, from immediate-term operational decisions to capital planning and asset management to long-term supply planning.

The Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA) is a group of ten large urban water suppliers that jointly collaborate on climate change and water issues. WUCA's members include Central Arizona Project, Denver Water, Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, New York City Department of Environmental Protection, Portland Water Bureau, San Diego County Water Authority, San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, Seattle Public Utilities, Southern Nevada Water Authority, and Tampa Bay Water. www.wucaonline.org.

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