



Imagine a Day Without Water

October 10, 2018

Guide on Engaging Candidates and Elected Officials

The Value of Water Campaign is dedicated to educating and inspiring the nation about how water is essential, invaluable, and in need of investment. A crucial element of this work is Imagine a Day Without Water, a national day of action designed to bring together individuals and organizations to illustrate the importance of water in our daily lives. This year, the fourth annual Imagine a Day Without Water falls just a few weeks before the crucial midterm elections.

That is why everyone who cares about water is invited to use our Imagine a Day Without Water Election Materials to engage candidates running for office—at every level of government.

Opportunities for Engagement

There is consistent, broad, and [bipartisan support](#) for increasing investment in our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure. This means policymakers should make water infrastructure investment part of their platform. Many candidates host local forums, town halls, debates, and community engagement events. It is even possible to [host these events](#) yourself. These are prime opportunities to raise the issue of infrastructure investment and draw the candidate's attention to the importance of this topic to their constituents. Talk to your local candidates about why water is important to your area and ask for their support for safe and reliable water infrastructure. Look for organizations in your area already planning forums or debates that you could partner with: League of Women Voters, League of Conservation Voters, news outlets, and community groups.

Sample Questions and Talking Points

Below are sample questions to ask candidates and talking points for you on water infrastructure.

Aging Infrastructure:

- Across the country water and wastewater infrastructure is nearing the end of its expected lifespan. If elected, what are your proposals for fixing our aging water systems before they fail?

Protecting Public Health:

- Water and wastewater infrastructure are critical to public health. If elected, what would you do to ensure our homes, schools, businesses, and healthcare facilities have safe and reliable water service?

Water Resource / Supply Challenges:

- With our finite water supplies and growing populations, some scientists predict we're moving into an era of water scarcity even in communities that generally receive plenty of rain. If elected, how would you ensure our community has a safe and reliable source of water into the future?

Increasing Vulnerability/Complexity:

- Utilities and companies that provide water services face a lot of challenges, including stress from age and severe weather patterns, that must be addressed. If elected, how will you enable our community's water utilities to meet the demands of the 21st century?

Preventing Water Pollution:

- Clean waterways are a huge asset to any community. If elected, how will you support utilities and community organizations to make [local water body] an amenity that all residents can enjoy safely?

Economic Development:

- Safe and reliable water service is crucial to our local businesses and to our region's economic development potential. How will you ensure our water services can support businesses and support business development?

Affordable Water Services:

- Investing in the nation's water infrastructure is critical. How will you ensure water services have the resources they need while balancing affordability for customers?

Talking Points on the Value of Water

Need to engage someone unfamiliar with the importance of our water systems? Try these talking points:

- Water is essential for everything we do in life. It keeps our families healthy, our communities vibrant, and our economy strong.
- Most sectors of our economy rely on water. Without water, our economy would grind to a halt.
- While nature provides water, it takes pipes, pumps, equipment, and people working 24/7 to deliver clean water to homes and businesses, and then remove and treat wastewater so it can safely be reused or returned to the environment.
- Water infrastructure is largely invisible. Because it's out of sight, it's out of mind for most people.
- The quality of life most Americans enjoy would not be possible without water and the utilities that bring it to and from homes and businesses.

Talking points about our nation's water infrastructure:

- After working around the clock for nearly 100 years, our nation's water infrastructure is aging and failing.
- Leaks and main breaks are a problem across the U.S.
 - 240,000 water main breaks happen across the country every year. That's more than 650 every day or one every two minutes.
 - We lose \$2.6 billion in drinking water through leaky pipes, about two trillion gallons a year -- that's six billion gallons a day. Enough for every man, woman and child in the US to have 18 gallons of water a day.

Talking points on solutions for our water challenges:

- Investment in our water infrastructure needs to be a top priority—at every level of government.
- We need water and wastewater bills that reflect what it costs to deliver these essential services and to invest in our infrastructure so it's in a state of good repair. We all need to work together to solve this.
- Water protects public health, water revitalizes neighborhoods and supports community vitality. Water keeps our economy flowing. We need to ensure we all have safe, reliable water so we can all thrive.