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OVERCOMING BARRIERS TO REUSE AS PART OF AN INTEGRATED WATER PORTFOLIO

Pamela Kenel*, Dan McCarthy, Lampe

ABSTRACT: Six roundtable discussions were conducted around the globe that brought together about 75 industry leaders to review the barriers to water reuse and to explore solutions and processes needed for overcoming them. This paper will present a summary of the issues, discussions, and key recommendations from the series. Participants represented a wide spectrum of experience with reuse and included government officials; municipal and private water/wastewater utility leaders; financial advisers; technical experts, suppliers; non-profit agency representatives; manufacturers of food, pharmaceuticals and chemicals; trade association leaders and academics. Representatives from around the world came together to discuss common themes and regional differences in reuse practices. Throughout the six discussions, a broad range of barriers to reuse were mentioned; but participants agreed that none of these hurdles were insurmountable. Among the most commonly mentioned were: *Overcoming negative public perceptions of reclaimed water; *Financing and pricing of water; *Regulatory challenges and institutional issues; *Finding sustainable water resource solutions appropriate to a particular situation; *Understanding what technology can do to overcome concerns about the risks of reuse; *Having the right data on reuse available at the right time. Four key recommendations emerged from the various roundtable discussions for water utility and other industry leaders to consider: 1. Work together to overcome public misperceptions through clear, consistent and continuous communications about water reuse and its place within an integrated water portfolio. 2. Emphasize the value of recycled water as a sustainable resource that will help meet future demands on the water supply. 3. Take a more integrated and open-minded approach to water supply portfolio management while developing water resources. 4. Call for more streamlined regulations and uniform standards. Conclusion Overall, participants agreed that adequate future water supply hinges on intelligent recovery and reuse. But advancing the option of water reuse will require new ways of thinking and breaking down silos that inhibit greater cooperation and interaction among agencies working with water, wastewater and storm water. Better controls, better data monitoring, better public education and better portfolio management - all should help overcome potential barriers to water reuse. Sharing best practices and models from around the world was deemed highly valuable.

* Associate Vice President, Black & Veatch, 18310 Montgomery Village Ave, Suite 500, Gaithersburg, MD 20879 USA, Phone: 301-921-2885, Fax: 301-921-2862, Email: kenelpp@bv.com