

WATER ENVIRONMENT FEDERATION

Title: Resource Recovery Position Statement

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BACKGROUND

Natural resources are limited, and their recovery is essential to healthy, sustainable communities. Water resource recovery facilities (WRRFs) provide the key to sustainable resource management for resources such as energy, carbon, phosphorus, and nitrogen. The following are resource recovery options available to WRRF:

- Nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, are abundant in wastewater while in limited supply. Their recovery offers an opportunity to generate such valuable products as struvite, ammonia, and other fertilizers.
- WRRFs can recover renewable natural gas as well as more energy from biosolids than they can do today through drying, gasification, and incineration. Diversifying markets make available new end uses for biosolids in agriculture, horticulture, soil reclamation, and carbon sequestration.
- Wastewater contains chemical, thermal, and hydraulic energy and with today's technology, a portion of these energy forms can be recovered at WRRFs and should be considered and evaluated for alternative end uses.
- Wastewater can be treated for indirect and direct potable use, as well as irrigation, groundwater recharge, and industrial uses.

ALIGNMENT WITH WEF'S MISSION AND CRITICAL OBJECTIVES

Since 1928, it has been the mission of WEF and its members to protect public health and the environment. This position statement is consistent with our mission and the following critical objectives:

- [3a](#): Be a visible and effective partner that increases public awareness of the value of water, water professionals, and resource recovery at national levels;
- [3b](#): Provide tools for members, Member Associations, utilities, and others to communicate the value of water, water professionals, and resource recovery to the public and decision-makers;
- [4a](#): Drive an increase in resource recovery in the water sector; and
- [4c](#): Promote the adoption of innovative utility management and financing practices.

POSITION

WRRFs engaging in resource recovery are the key to a healthy and sustainable community. WEF supports the following:

- Balance competing priorities of removal and recovery of nutrients, and recovery of other products such as carbon and energy and climate change goals that lead to sustainable solutions.
- Increase awareness of the importance of resource recovery and incentivize WRRFs to continue and grow their contributions to the communities they serve.
- Develop legislation and/or regulations that promote resource recovery and incentivize markets and products.
- Increase research investment for resource recovery.
- Incentivize and invest in the innovation, development, advancement, and deployment of processes and technologies that make nutrient recovery more cost effective.

- Reduce barriers to beneficial use adoption.
- Promote a holistic approach to find the best cost-effective option for resource recovery while minimizing the environmental impacts.