



# World Water Day Messaging Guidance

March 22, 2023

This year marks the 30th annual observance of [World Water Day](#), a global day to raise awareness and inspire action to solve the world's water and sanitation crisis. 2023's theme is Accelerating Change and coincides with the [UN Water Conference](#) and [New York Water Week](#). This is a significant year for water, as it is only the second time in history the United Nations has hosted a conference specifically focused on water, and the first time this global event is being held in the United States.

The Water Equity & Climate Resilience Caucus will use this opportunity to bring attention to efforts across the country to change our relationship with water and call for a future where water is a human right. A little background: In 2010, the United Nations declared safe and clean drinking water and sanitation [is a human right](#) (without support from the United States). Since then, California became the first and only state to legislatively codify the human right to water in 2013. The United States failed to follow suit and the [Sustainable Development Goal](#) for clean water and sanitation is still unrealized. Please join us *in* declaring that water is a human right by using the message guidance and sample social media posts below.

## Topline Messages

*These messages were developed from conversations during the Caucus's National Call (February 2023) and the Climate Justice Working Group. Our goal is to uplift WEQR perspectives and a shared voice. Please feel free to use this messaging to support any media and communications you are doing on World Water Day.*

### **Water is a human right**

Water is the foundation of good health and thriving communities. But more than 2 million people in the United States live without access to safe running water or a working toilet and more than half our waterways are still not safe for drinking, swimming, and fishing. Depleting and polluting waterways puts not only our own health at risk, but threatens the ecosystems, fish, and wildlife we live alongside. Communities today face outdated or unenforced health and safety standards, failing infrastructure, unaffordable bills, and the legacy of segregation and redlining. We must recognize the human right to water and accelerate action.



### **We must honor and respect water**

Even as we assert that water is a human right, we recognize that water is not something we own. Many of our current challenges are rooted in the colonial tendency to take water for granted or treat it as a commodity. Only by shifting our relationship with water, and honoring its full cultural, spiritual, and life-sustaining value can we ensure that there will be enough clean water to meet the needs of both communities and ecosystems. That means practicing a reciprocal relationship with water and uplifting Indigenous traditional ways of relating to water.

### **We must take on the water and climate crises together**

Safe, reliable, and affordable water access is inextricably tied to climate justice. We will not realize a human right to water without taking climate action. Rising temperatures are drying out rivers and reservoirs out West while supercharging extreme weather. Our water systems are simply unprepared for climate disaster. We must stop drilling, mining, and burning fossil fuels that harm communities and pollute our waters while updating our infrastructure to change with the climate. That means following community leadership, respecting and protecting natural ecosystems, and ensuring water systems are healthy, can handle stress, and recover from climate extremes.

### **Water justice should be in the hands of the people**

Right now, communities are often shut out of decisions about their water. Following the leadership of the frontlines means shifting decision-making power to the people most impacted by climate and water challenges and respecting Indigenous sovereignty. Water is a human right that must remain a public good, not a commodity to buy and sell. [Voters agree](#) that publicly owned utilities are more likely to deliver safe, reliable, and affordable water and prefer their drinking water systems to be public rather than owned by a private company.