

**Imagine a Day
Without Water**
October 23, 2019

#ValueWater



NWSA
NATIONAL WATER SUPPLY ALLIANCE

Securing Water Supply for Current and Future Generations

By Dave Mitamura

On October 23, 2019, we Imagine A Day Without Water. Americans enjoy the most dependable, clean water supply on the planet. Most of us, however, take water supply for granted every day. Imagine, though, if a turn of the tap did not produce a drop of water. It would be frustrating to not be able to complete your daily routine of bathing, cleaning dishes, and doing laundry, among many other tasks. It would, however, be devastating to not have water to drink and sustain life. Imagine that.

On Imagine A Day Without Water, take a moment to think about what would happen if your community's water supply was depleted. What would that experience be like for your family? What would firefighters do? Could hospitals be sanitary without clean water? Would restaurants and hotels be able to serve guests? Would farmers be able to water their crops or care for their livestock? Would manufacturing plants shut down, affecting numerous jobs?

We take for granted that we don't have to ask those questions every day, but rest assured that America's water supply providers are continuously focused on those and many other questions on your behalf. Population growth, frequency and duration of drought, and an increasing need for water storage options are just some of the factors considered by your local and regional water supply providers as they manage this critical resource. A national discussion on infrastructure is timely and important. Yet, water supply is often neglected by policymakers in this discussion, despite its life-giving importance and integral role in our economy.

The complexity of managing water supply is vast, and few citizens know how water supplies are developed, where their water comes from, or who is responsible for delivering it. Today's hyper-social media and sound-bite driven environment does not provide a forum to examine and understand the barriers and solutions for facilitating responsible and responsive management of our nation's water supplies. To address the lack of focus on water supply issues the nation's water supply providers are working hard to raise their voice, with a focus on increasing awareness of water supply challenges and the need for greater attention from policymakers and federal agencies with water management responsibilities. Your life and livelihood depend on it.

More specifically, the National Water Supply Alliance (NWSA) is highlighting the importance of water supply in discussions with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Historically, the Corps has placed very little focus on water supply, noting that water supply is a not a primary "mission" of

the Corps. While technically accurate, this lack of focus to date has ignored the facts. One hundred and thirty-six reservoirs in the Corps' portfolio provide almost 10 million acre-feet (3.3 trillion gallons) of storage for municipal and industrial water supply. The investment in this storage is valued at \$6.1 billion in 2016 dollars and can provide water supply to over 100 million people, according to Corps reports. In addition, Corps reservoirs could provide even higher storage volumes and access to water supply through policy and regulatory improvements. We urge the Corps to Imagine A Day Without Water, thus elevating the Corps' attention and focus on its water supply responsibilities.

NWSA appreciates the Corps' current willingness to listen to water supply providers and discuss water supply management challenges. The Corps has recently been keenly engaged on regulatory and policy issues related to water supply and state water rights. In particular, NWSA is hopeful that the Corps will work closely with water supply providers and managers as it deliberates on the need for and impacts of a national water supply rule.

Strong leadership on water is key to securing America's future. Imagine A Day Without Water is an opportunity for everyone to become educated about local and regional water supplies and challenges, and to help organizations that are working to solve our water challenges. It is also a day for us to engage with our elected leaders and say, with one voice, that these are big problems that won't be solved in a silo. We need leadership at every level to develop approaches to address water supply policy, funding and management if we want to deliver a dependable and affordable water supply to every American, our economy, and our environment. We must ensure a reliable water future for generations to come. Investing in water is investing in a future where no American will have to Imagine A Day Without Water.

Dave Mitamura is the Executive Director of the National Water Supply Alliance. NWSA is a national organization formed to advance the interests of water supply providers before the United States Congress and federal agencies whose actions impact water supply storage and projects. NWSA's members include state, regional, and local governments, as well as wholesale water providers and utilities who rely on water supply stored in federal facilities maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. <https://www.nationalwatersupply.org>