



# Media Advisory

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## **Water Experts: Global Water Crisis Calls For U.S. Leadership** **National Water Commission Needed to Head New Effort to Ease U.S., Global Water Crisis**

Oakland, Calif – The Pacific Institute today called for the creation of a National Water Commission for the 21st Century to direct an aggressive new effort to protect our national water resources and to advise the country on how to best to participate in addressing the global water crisis. The benefits of such an effort will include a stronger national economy, improved international security, and more sustainable water use around the world.

“Millions of people – mainly children – are dying every year from a lack of clean drinking water,” said Peter H. Gleick, an internationally-recognized water expert and President of the Pacific Institute.

“Across the globe and even in the water-rich United States, climate change, crumbling infrastructure, and pollution threaten our supplies of clean drinking water. In short, never has the need for a strong U.S. effort to protect clean water been so important.”

According to research by the Pacific Institute, the United Nations, and other water experts at least 1.1 billion people do not have access to clean drinking water, some 2.4 billion people lack access to safe sanitation systems, and 2 to 5 million people – mainly children – die from preventable, water-related diseases every year. In the United States, municipalities are faced with billions of dollars of infrastructure needs and growing disputes over the role of public and private water management. And climate change, pollution, and development threaten water supplies across the world. (More info: [http://www.pacinst.org/reports/freshwater\\_threats.htm](http://www.pacinst.org/reports/freshwater_threats.htm))

“The good news is, that despite the threats to clean water, we have the scientific know-how to extend service to those who need it while protecting existing water supplies. What we lack is a coordinated water policy in the United States and a consistent and proactive approach to international water issues. A National Water Commission will help the United States on both of these counts,” continued Gleick.

The proposed Commission should:

- Re-evaluate national water science and policy and offer guidance on integrating efforts now scattered among disparate and uncoordinated federal agencies and departments.
- Recommend revisions or better enforcement of national laws related to water and develop recommendations for implementing overdue changes to national flood and drought management and the management of our groundwater resources.
- Work with appropriate agencies to identify necessary steps to ensure the physical security of the nation’s water resources and water infrastructure.
- Develop recommendations for the U.S. role in identifying and addressing global water problems, including how to significantly accelerate efforts to meet the large and devastating unmet basic human needs for water in poorer countries.
- Explore how to deal with the growing and potential severe consequences of global climate change for both national and international water resources.
- Make recommendations for reducing the risks of international tensions over shared water resources. This includes addressing concerns with our own neighbors, Mexico and Canada, as well as in international rivers.

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