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Aqua North Carolina President Says Private Utilities Can Play Critical Role in Rebuilding Nation's Water and Wastewater Systems

CARY, N.C.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Tom Roberts, president of Aqua North Carolina, Inc. (Aqua) spoke today about the key role that public-private partnerships can play to rehabilitate the nation's aging water and wastewater infrastructure. Roberts made his remarks at a conference held by the National Association of Water Companies' southeast chapter in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency released survey results this year that show an investment need through 2030 of \$384 billion nationwide for drinking water system repairs and improvements, including thousands of miles of pipes and thousands of treatment plants, storage tanks and water distribution systems, which are all vital to public health and the economy.

"Reliable water and wastewater services are necessities of life, and our country needs to make sure that the pipes, treatment plants, wells, tanks and fire hydrants that deliver these services are properly maintained now and in the future," said Roberts. "We can't rely on state and local governments to bear all the costs of this massive undertaking. Private, publicly regulated utilities can work with governments to provide the financial resources and technical expertise needed to repair and operate aging systems."

North Carolina is at the forefront of addressing the state's infrastructure needs by enacting a law this year that creates a water and wastewater infrastructure improvement charge (WSIC) designed to provide customers of the state's regulated water and wastewater utilities with improved water quality and better water and wastewater systems while enabling utilities to recover capital costs in a timely way. The WSIC encourages utilities to accelerate much-needed infrastructure improvements, such as installing treatment systems and replacing aged distribution pipe. The new law maintains rigorous regulatory oversight by the North Carolina Utilities Commission, and recovery of capital is only allowed for reasonable, prudent and completed projects approved by the Commission.

Last year, Aqua spent more than \$11 million to repair and improve water and wastewater systems throughout North Carolina. Aqua provides water and wastewater service to more than 250,000 residents in 52 counties throughout North Carolina. Visit aquaamerica.com for more information.

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