

# The Flow of Freedom



As we begin to move toward a post COVID-19 normalcy, our July 4th celebration takes on added significance in light of what we have endured as a nation.

*“The COVID-19 crisis has been a powerful reminder of the essential need to provide clean water and safe sanitation for all, to prevent disease and promote opportunity and quality of life,”* said Christine Boyle, Vice President of Business Incubation.

While we celebrate past and recent victories in the preservation of our freedom, we remain vigilant of a battle raging in our midst: the battle for equitable access to clean, safe and affordable water across the US - as America’s waters flow, so does our freedom.

America’s aging water utility infrastructure is precarious and vulnerable. It is nonetheless a vital component to our prosperity and future economic growth.

*“All other infrastructure sectors, whether you look at transportation, education, hospitals, roads, bridges are funded more along the lines of 60% federal investment, 40% local state. It’s exactly the opposite in the context of water infrastructure, where we have 95% local investment and 5% federal investment. That to me is something that needs to be addressed very directly. There’s nothing more important than water infrastructure.”* Adam Krantz, Chief Executive, NACWA

This disproportionate investment model for water infrastructure served as a catalyst in the development of Xylem’s Water Equity Lens, a tool that supports utilities in the advancement of water equity.

As water and wastewater utilities work to serve and protect their communities, they face growing challenges. Many of the water and wastewater inequities can be attributed to geography, income, race, and other factors. For example, different neighborhoods, with different income levels, might be burdened differently by the water and

wastewater rate structures. Thus, equalizing levels of access across America presents an on going challenge, one that limits the actualization of the freedom which we celebrate every July 4th.

At the heart of the Water Equity Lens are a myriad of indicators which are represented graphically. When analyzed, actionable insights can be gleaned which have a strategic impact on water equity initiatives. In other words, real data is used to help drive water equity –based planning.

According to the US Water Alliance, *“Water equity occurs when all communities have access to safe, clean, affordable drinking water and wastewater services; are resilient in the face of floods, drought, and other climate risks; have a role in decision-making processes related to water management in their communities; and share in the economic, social, and environmental benefits of water systems”*

Xylem is committed to water equity. The Water Equity Lens is a major advancement in our on-going pursuit of nationwide water equity.

We recognize our pursuits in light of the freedom made possible by the sacrifice of so many who have fought and given their lives protecting America’s freedom.

It is by their sacrifice that the flow of freedom continues in everything we do and who we are as a nation.

*Diogenes Ruiz*