

Delivering water for humans through law.



The CWSC works to ensure that law and practice guarantee water security and universal access to water and sanitation.

Because words matter: without good law those people who have access will lose it, and those who don't won't ever get it.

WORDS DELIVER.

CWSC was founded to solve the biggest gap in meeting human water needs: the law. The law often:

1. Does not exist.
2. Exists but is not working: it does not support the goals we have or does not do what we need it to do.
3. Exists but hurts people, intentionally in some cases.
4. Exists but no one knows about it or no one understands it.

The CWSC tackles each of these challenges, often together. Our successes have led to exceptional advances in water governance and stability around the world.

MISSION.

The Center for Water Security and Cooperation works to advance water security and cultivate cooperation by building a unified body of laws, policies, practices, and standards that ensure the availability of water for current and future generations, and a peaceful, stable, and vibrant global society.

WHO WE ARE.

Water lawyers. Educators. Advocates. Building a rule of law that guarantees a future where humans exist.

Learn more about our work: thecwsc.org.



United States: Mississippi River Watershed.

Enabling watershed management of one of the most important rivers in the United States and the world. A decade in the making, the CWSC developed the Mississippi River Local and Tribal Leaders Agreement to mobilize local and Tribal leaders to collaboratively develop working policy and collaborative solutions to ensure the future of the vibrant Mississippi River watershed. The Mississippi River is the second longest river in the United States, supporting \$400 billion of economic activity, serving as a habitat for 325 species, and supplying drinking water for tens of millions of people. Despite its importance, there is no shared vision, policy, plan, or law to govern the river or watershed. Our long term goal is to develop an interstate water compact for the Mississippi River. To do that, the CWSC must build a foundation for collaboration and cooperation and a space to focus on the protection and preservation of the river and the communities, jobs, and people who rely on it.

The Agreement showcases CWSC's innovative approach to building political consensus and action. Leaders who sign the Agreement become part of the Mighty Mississippi Leaders Network. As part of the Network they participate in the Leaders Roundtable to define the future through the development of a set of shared values and principles for the watershed. These values and principles will serve as a vision for lawmakers, building a common ground for comprehensive and collaborative management of the River. We are also pleased that nonprofit and for-profit organizations are joining these efforts as Future of the River Advisors and supporting the work of the CWSC and local and Tribal leaders. While many of the impacts are felt in individual communities, protecting the future of the river is a broader effort. By combining these two approaches and building the bridge between the local communities and watershed leaders, the CWSC is investing in the future of one of the most critical assets of the entire country.



United States: Nationwide.

Advancing water access and equity through state and local law and utility management. In 2019, the CWSC published the first ever comprehensive examination of local laws governing water access and affordability, focusing on Maryland. Our report examined the intricacies of more than 150 communities' laws and revealed the accessibility trap that many laws created for low-income families. Our report and methodology were cited by the US Commission on Civil Rights Maryland Advisory Committee and spurred the development of legislation in multiple states to increase transparency of utility operations and their treatment of all customers.

The CWSC took this approach nationwide in its inaugural American Water Access Survey (AWAS). The AWAS examines how law and utility practice supports or hinders access to water and sanitation by evaluating local law and utility practice. The AWAS provided a roadmap for changing local law so that it ensures all families have access to water and sanitation.

Adding to this top-down governance approach, the CWSC is training and empowering rising water and wastewater utility leaders through its Water Utility Leadership Fellowship (WULF) program. The WULF program brings together emerging utility leaders to educate them and support their development of water and wastewater access and affordability plans for their utilities. Through this program, millions of people have gained greater protections and assistance, ensuring that water will not be cut off because they cannot afford it.



El Salvador.

Supporting the drafting of the first ever national water law and creating a functional ministry and a legal human right to water. The CWSC was sent by the U.S. Department of State to work with the U.S. Embassy in El Salvador and El Salvador's Ministry of Environment to help bring their first ever national water law across the finish line. For a decade, the law had languished due to competing politics. The CWSC worked with diverse stakeholders—from private and public sector groups to the different governmental ministries and members of the legislature—to formulate a draft law that reflected the many needs of the country. The law was adopted in 2022 and created the first-of-its-kind water security ministry, while also defining and legally protecting the human rights to water and sanitation for all of El Salvador's people.

Since, the CWSC has worked with the government to develop a national drinking water and sanitation law to provide depth to the legal protections. Bolstering the law, the CWSC also advised the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Fondo de la Iniciativa para las Americas (FIAES), and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) on the development of a US \$1 billion debt for nature ("DFN") swap in the Rio Lempa watershed. The CWSC crafted the sustainability commitments that were the core of the swap, while helping ensure the viability of the enforcement mechanism. These commitments represent some of the most innovative and wide-ranging protections for the basin and its people in its history, helping the country prepare and invest for the future.