



Washington

wants to know



Majority Of Americans Support Desalination Projects

by Hal Furman

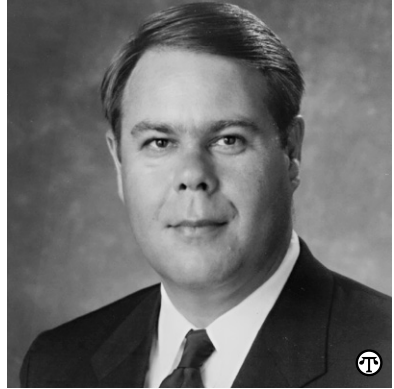
(NAPSA)—The vast majority of our planet's surface consists of seawater. Pure, clean water is something that many take for granted, unaware that a mere three percent of the earth's water is fresh. A water crisis exists because our sources of clean, drinkable water are rapidly diminishing. There is, however, one solution that most Americans believe should be actively pursued—desalination.

A recently conducted national survey found that a vast majority of Americans believe the potential for a water shortage is a significant issue. Additionally, eight out of ten Americans favor desalination as a means to help solve the growing water shortage.

Moreover, seventy percent favor using federal funding to facilitate the construction and operation of desalination plants. The American people want the federal government to support desalination projects.

A growing number of members of Congress believe the time for action is now. To date, nearly 40 members of the U.S. House of Representatives have sponsored legislation to provide assistance to desalination plants (H.R. 1071) and the bill is being introduced in the U.S. Senate. Under this proposal the Department of Energy would provide financial assistance to partially offset the cost of the electrical energy needed to operate these facilities.

Whether desalination projects



**WATER, WATER EVERYWHERE—
Desalination is no longer considered a crazy idea.**

get built in time to address the mounting water supply crisis may depend on whether the Federal government invests in this new infrastructure.

Given the ever worsening water crisis we now face in this country, doesn't it make sense that we take action to utilize the oceans to solve our water crisis? I believe the answer is "yes"; particularly since the technology now exists to convert seawater and brackish water to clean drinking water cost-effectively. As one environmentalist said, "desalination is no longer the crazy aunt in the attic."

• *Hal Furman is Executive Director of the U.S. Desalination Coalition and served as Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Water & Science during the Reagan Administration.*

For more information: www.USDESAL.org.