

DRAFT RECOMMENDATION LETTER (DELIBERATIVE, FINAL VERSION FORTHCOMING AND TO BE SUBMITTED TO SECRETARY OF COMMERCE HOWARD LUTNICK)

[DATE], 2026

The Honorable Howard Lutnick
Secretary
U.S. Department of Commerce
1401 Constitution Ave., N.W.
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Lutnick:

The Environmental Technologies Trade Advisory Committee (ETTAC) writes to underscore the strong economic, commercial, and strategic interest of the United States in actively engaging in the 2026 United Nations Water Conference.

[INSERT STOCK ETTAC INTRODUCTION]

As outlined in our September 2025 correspondence, global water security is not only an environmental priority—it is a major driver of U.S. economic growth, export competitiveness, and geopolitical stability. Today, these stakes are even clearer. The U.S. water and wastewater sector represents approximately \$200 billion (*insert citation*) in annual domestic industry revenue, spanning equipment manufacturing, engineering services, digital solutions, chemicals, and utilities. Water is also a critical nexus with our national priorities in growing data centers and artificial intelligence (AI), representing a market of more than \$53 billion by 2033.

At the same time, U.S. water technology companies are global leaders in advanced treatment systems, membrane filtration, desalination, water reuse, AI-enabled monitoring, and industrial process water solutions—high-value export segments positioned to capture a growing share of a global water technology market projected to reach over \$75 billion by 2030. (*insert citation*)

U.S. engagement in the 2026 UN Water Conference—scheduled for December 2026—provides a critical platform to expand these commercial opportunities, as governments, development banks, and private investors gather to coordinate financing and procurement tied to major water infrastructure and technology deployments worldwide.

Advancing U.S. Commercial Leadership

Participation enables the U.S. to position its water technology and environmental services firms at the forefront of emerging global demand for:

- Smart water infrastructure and digital water management systems.
- PFAS and advanced contaminant treatment technologies.

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- Water recycling, reuse, efficiency, and desalination solutions.
- Industrial water optimization systems, especially data centers, energy, manufacturing, mineral processing, and semiconductor sectors.
- Agriculture water management and precision agriculture applications. infrastructure investments (e.g: public, private, and P3) financing options for water and wastewater related investments.

These areas are precisely where U.S. companies lead technologically and compete globally on quality and innovation. Supporting these areas are consistent with our ETTAC July 23, 2025 letter: Promoting the Export of the American AI Technology Stack.

Alignment with an America First Trade Agenda

Active engagement in the Conference directly supports the Administration’s *America First Trade Policy*, which prioritizes expanding exports, strengthening U.S. industrial and technological advantages, and reducing trade imbalances. Global water infrastructure investment represents a significant export opportunity for U.S. manufacturers and service providers support high-quality domestic jobs while reducing reliance on foreign supply chains and reinforcing U.S. economic security.

Moreover, water infrastructure development abroad reduces instability, supply chain disruptions, and migration pressures—delivering tangible benefits to American economic and national security interests.

Consistency with Executive Branch Priorities

Enhanced U.S. engagement is consistent with existing executive actions, including (citation):

- Executive Order on America First Trade Policy (2025) – directing agencies to promote U.S. competitiveness, exports, and industrial leadership
- Executive Order 13956 (2020), Modernizing America’s Water Resource Management and Infrastructure – recognizing water systems as foundational to economic growth, public health, and national resilience
- EPA Administrator Zeldin identified policy priorities include a pillar of dominating in the AI space.

These authorities reinforce the importance of integrating water policy, trade promotion, and infrastructure leadership—both domestically and internationally.

Strategic Rationale for Engagement

The 2026 UN Water Conference will shape global priorities on water investment, governance,

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and financing. Without strong U.S. participation, standards, procurement practices, and partnerships may evolve in ways that disadvantage American firms and limit access to fast-growing markets.

Proactive engagement ensures:

- Expanded market access for U.S. exports
- Increased participation of U.S. firms in donor-funded infrastructure projects
- Promotion of transparent, market-based approaches aligned with U.S. values
- Strengthened commercial diplomacy in strategically important regions
- Involvement in strategic water related security initiatives

Recommended Actions

ETTAC respectfully urges the Department of Commerce to:

- Work with the Water Subcabinet and other Agencies to lead an interagency effort to ensure robust U.S. participation in the Conference.
- Continue to integrate trade promotion and export financing into water diplomacy efforts.
- Support U.S. industry engagement through trade missions, matchmaking, and partnerships tied to Conference outcomes.
- Coordinate with multilateral development banks to expand and ensure opportunities for U.S. firms.

Water security is a global challenge—but it is also a generational and transformational economic opportunity for the United States. Strategic engagement in the 2026 UN Water Conference will advance American commercial leadership, support domestic job creation, and reinforce U.S. influence in a sector critical to long-term global stability.

Sincerely,

Clare Schulzki
ETTAC Chair