



Water & Power

Discussion Guide

Let's review

At the start of each discussion, review the conversation ground rules for returning and new members alike to set the stage for active participation by all. You may want to use a timer as you go around the room.

And don't forget to decide who will take notes and post a discussion recap.

- **Be open and curious:** Everyone has a unique perspective, so listen and be prepared to hear a different point of view. Remember, you do not need to share your political affiliation; this is a discussion and exchange of ideas, not politics.
- **Be respectful and engaged:** Be sure that everyone has a chance to speak before adding a second comment or perspective. Encourage each other's participation.
- **Be focused and concise:** Keep the conversation centered on the issue and the brief.

The "Table-it" Rule: If the group has gone off-topic but the area is of interest, the group can table the conversation and save it for another time to be addressed in a different manner.

Let's begin

- Take five minutes to review the [Executive Summary](#) for this brief. Highlight the main point of each section and key statistics.
- Each member is invited to answer the following questions in a **two-three minute reaction** to the brief:
 - Introduce yourself, and share what "lens of care" did you wear when reviewing this brief (e.g. personal, professional, community, state, nation, global)?
 - What did you find most interesting or surprising from reading the brief? What matters?

Spread the word: facts to share during your discussion

- Over [155,000 public water systems](#) in the U.S. provide 90% of Americans with tap water. [Private water systems](#) serve over 36 million Americans.
- At least [2 million Americans](#) do not have access to safe drinking water and sanitation. In 2019, more than [44 million Americans](#) received water from community systems that had health-based Safe Drinking Water Act violations.
- The U.S. [needs to invest](#) an estimated \$109 billion per year in water infrastructure over the next 20 years to close the water infrastructure gap. At present, the U.S. is only meeting about 37% of the nation's total water infrastructure capital needs.

Let's discuss

Below are questions for the group to consider and discuss, or choose your own.

- **Community:** Has your water consumption changed over the past few years? What conditions exist in your community (aging infrastructure, history of contamination, rural location, drought- or flood-prone areas) that affect water infrastructure?
- **Government:** Should the water infrastructure funding distribution or management among local, state, and federal governments change?
- **Business:** What role do businesses - such as those in the energy or agriculture industries - have in water conservation efforts or water infrastructure innovation?

Let's act

1. **Take it local.** Talk to neighbors, friends, and family. Ask for their views and perspective on water use, water sources, and environmental impacts. Consider hosting another conversation with other community members.
2. **Explore the impact of legislation related to water and power in your community.** On your municipality's website you can find information pertaining to water infrastructure. You can search the various departments, agencies, and programs related to water utilities on your municipality's or state's website.
3. **Investigate community programs** in your state or municipality. Investigate [water use in your state](#) and the [utilities in your state](#).
4. **Research your elected representatives' positions** on water and power, and their vision for how to tackle related challenges. You can find contact information for federal, state, and local government officials [here](#). Your state or municipality's websites will also have information to contact leaders. Try looking at the drop-down menu for a *Government* tab.
5. **Establish a relationship with your legislators.** It's easy to establish a relationship with your legislators. Start by introducing yourself. You can also learn to write to your representatives or set up a meeting with a legislator on [The Policy Circle website](#).
6. **Consider writing a letter to the editor or an op-ed on your stance on water infrastructure and innovation in your local paper.** Learn how on [The Policy Circle website](#).

Next Steps for Your Circle

- **Post a Recap:** Summarize your discussion to share thoughts with members not present, and share planned actions from group members. Designate who will post a meeting recap on your circle page.
- **Decide your next meeting topic.** Want to discuss a related brief at your next meeting? Suggestions include:
 - [Energy and Environment](#)
 - [Impact Investing](#)
- **Dive Deeper into the issues.** If this is an area you would like to pursue further, consider taking possible steps to influence policy. The Policy Circle offers resources for [developing a message about your issue](#) and [organizing a petition](#) to amplify your voice and raise awareness. Don't miss our [latest events](#) that help you dive deeper on this issue and more.