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NEWS RELEASE
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Imagine H2O Program to Advance Innovative Water Infrastructure Solutions
Path-to-market program connects promising water startups with commercial opportunities

San Francisco, May 15, 2014 —Imagine H2O, a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring and empowering people to turn water problems into opportunities, today launched its Infrastructure Challenge. The Challenge—Imagine H2O's sixth annual Business Innovations Program—will identify and support innovative water businesses presenting scalable solutions that improve water and wastewater infrastructure in a matter resulting in quantifiable cost savings or environmental impact.

To date, Imagine H2O's portfolio represents 1 in every 6 dollars of investment in early stage water companies, and over 350 startups from 15 countries have participated in this international program. The competition supports innovations in emerging and developed markets alike. Participating water startups will compete for cash awards and in-kind services, as well as admission to Imagine H2O's Accelerator Program, where they will receive mentorship from sector experts and introductions to investors, strategic partners, and end users. The program will also connect winning companies with utilities from Imagine H2O's growing network of water utilities and agencies, which currently serves over 25 million people in major metropolitan areas throughout the country.

Over 400 industry experts and Imagine H2O's Scientific Advisory Council guided the topic selection process. They chose "infrastructure" for the innovation and entrepreneurial opportunities it presents. Nearly \$20 trillion in investment is needed to meet the water infrastructure needs of the global population, according to a recent McKinsey report. As of 2012, 83% of those without access to an improved drinking water source lived in rural areas, and continued rapid population growth in urban areas will further strain existing water supply. According to 21 mayors in major U.S. metropolitan areas in a letter to President Obama, one fifth of the U.S. economy would "grind to a halt" without a reliable and clean supply of water.

"Systematic failure related to extreme weather patterns and growing population place more stress on global water infrastructure and supply," said Imagine H2O COO Scott Bryan. "Deteriorating and nonexistent water infrastructure is a concern to populations all across the world, and catalyzing and supporting entrepreneurial water solutions is an essential step toward building a secure water future and more resilient infrastructure."

Imagine H2O's judging panel, which has previously included leading industry experts from companies such as CH2M Hill, American Water, Ecolab, and True North Venture Partners, will base its selection of the winners and runners up on their commercial viability, customer value proposition, go-to market strategy, and financial plan. Imagine H2O's major financial supporters include Wells Fargo (Headline Sponsor), Grundfos, Cooley LLP, and the California Water Foundation.

About Imagine H2O

Imagine H2O inspires and empowers people to solve water challenges and turn them into opportunities. We offer annual competitions for water innovation with focused, specific challenges including *Water Efficiency* (2009), *Water-Energy Nexus* (2010), *Wastewater* (2011), *Consumer Innovations* (2012), and

Food and Agriculture (2013). In addition to financial support for the best ideas, the Imagine H2O Accelerator helps participating entrepreneurs turn their plans into transformational, real-world solutions. To learn more about Imagine H2O's global ecosystem for water innovation and connect with water entrepreneurs from around the world, please visit www.imagineh2o.org.