FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
For more information, contact:
Carrie W. Capuco
Director of Communications
571-384-2097
ccapuco@waterrf.org

The Water Research Foundation Announces the Winner of Its 2018 Outstanding Subscriber Awards and the Dr. Pankaj Parekh Research Innovation Award

Alexandria, VA, 6/14/18 – The Water Research Foundation (WRF) announced Tuesday that it has awarded the 2018 Dr. Pankaj Parekh Research Innovation Award to Dr. George Di Giovanni from Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, and two Outstanding Subscriber Awards for Applied Research to Halifax Water (Nova Scotia) and the Orange County Water District (OCWD, California). Dr. Di Giovanni and both Outstanding Subscriber Award recipients were honored during WRF’s annual Subscriber Appreciation Breakfast at the American Water Works Association’s conference, ACE18.

The Dr. Pankaj Parekh Research Innovation Award honors researchers who have made significant contributions to advancing the science of water through WRF-sponsored projects. The award is named after Dr. Pankaj Parekh, a tireless advocate for water research who dedicated over 40 years of his life to ensuring safe drinking water and protecting public health. WRF’s Outstanding Subscriber Award for Applied Research honors subscribing utilities that have successfully applied WRF research to make notable improvements to their water treatment, delivery, and/or management processes.

“The huge reason The Water Research Foundation is successful is because of our dedicated researchers and engaged utility subscribers,” said Rob Renner, Chief Executive Officer of The Water Research Foundation. “Dr. Di Giovanni and the professionals at Halifax Water and OCWD have been deeply involved with WRF for many years and we are thrilled to recognize them today for their many achievements.

Dr. Di Giovanni served as a Principal Investigator on significant Cryptosporidium detection projects funded by The Water Research Foundation. Through two WRF projects in 2008 and 2010, he and his research team led an international group of collaborators to develop and field test an innovative and cost-effective method for genotyping Cryptosporidium oocysts on regulatory monitoring slides. The method has now been adopted by several laboratories around the world performing standard Cryptosporidium monitoring by microscopy. Through these projects, he clearly demonstrated
research innovation and knowledge that can be applied by utilities and other end users.

“I'm very honored to receive this award. The legacy that Dr. Parekh left to the water world is really tremendous,” said Di Giovanni. “This inspires me to do more and be relentless in the pursuit of understanding water quality challenges and seeking innovative research solutions.”

Halifax Water provides drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater services to over 365,000 people through 23 treatment facilities. A subscriber of the legacy Water Research Foundation since 1989, Halifax Water has been active both in research planning and project participation. Halifax Water has been involved in 27 research projects, 15 of its staff have served on planning bodies, and it is involved in 9 ongoing studies.

“It’s an absolute honor to be recognized by our peers as a progressive research utility,” said Carl Yates, General Manager at Halifax Water. “Halifax has always promoted research, and that’s why we’ve been so involved with WRF over the years.” Through its research with WRF, Halifax has led the way in water loss control and continues to realize the nexus between water and energy.

Formed 85 years ago, OCWD manages the region's groundwater basin, ensures water reliability and quality, prevents seawater intrusion, and protects Orange County's rights to Santa Ana River water. In 1977, OCWD’s Water Factory 21 became the first facility in the world to use reverse osmosis to purify wastewater to drinking water standards. Water Factory 21 was followed by the Groundwater Replenishment System, the world's largest system for indirect potable reuse.

“We’re very humbled to win this award. OCWD has been doing applied research since the late 1970s, and we’re very proud of that tradition. It’s helped us to refine our processes so that we can provide safe drinking water at the lowest possible cost,” said Mike Markus, General Manager at Orange County Water District.

Award nominations are accepted from WRF’s Board of Directors, staff, subscribers, researchers, and other water community partners. The Board of Directors’ Awards Committee selects each year’s winners. For additional information about WRF’s annual awards and past award winners, please visit www.WaterRF.org/awards.

The Water Research Foundation (WRF) is the leading research organization advancing the science of all water to meet the evolving needs of its subscribers and the water sector. WRF is a nonprofit, charitable and educational organization which funds, manages, and publishes research on the technology, operation, and management of drinking water, wastewater, reuse, and stormwater collection, treatment and supply systems—all in pursuit of ensuring water quality and improving water services to the public.

####