



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Aug. 29, 2019

Media Contact: Travis Loop, 703.684.2465, tloop@wef.org

Diversity, Inclusion to be Center Stage during WEFTEC 2019 Opening General Session

ALEXANDRIA, Va. – If you're passionate about water and building a strong, diverse and inclusive water workforce of the future, you need to be at WEFTEC 2019, the Water Environment Federation's 92nd annual technical conference and exhibition. Held at McCormick Place in Chicago, The Water Quality Event will host more than 20,000 water professionals and more than 1,000 water companies from around the world from September 21 through September 25.

Officially kicking things off will be the Opening General Session on Monday, September 23 in the Grand Ballroom from 8:30 a.m. to 9:40 a.m. Building on the 2019 conference theme of *ReGeneration: Workforce*, the program will set the tone for attendees with a keynote presentation from **Dr. Lera Boroditsky**, an Associate Professor of Cognitive Science at the University of California San Diego and Editor-in-Chief of *Frontiers in Cultural Psychology*.

Boroditsky will bring a unique perspective to the topics of workforce development, diversity and inclusion by sharing her research into how differences in language can shape the way we think, perceive and respond to each other. By learning to recognize and overcome potential biases, communication nuances and preconceptions, water professionals can improve how we work together, mentor each other and recruit new talent into the water sector.

Rounding out the program will be a local welcome from Commissioner and President of the Metropolitan Water District of Greater Chicago **Kari Steele** and remarks from 2018-19 WEF President **Tom Kunetz**, retiring WEF Executive Director **Eileen O'Neill** and the new WEF Executive Director **Walt Marlowe**.

Other highlights include a preview of the soon-to-be released documentary, [Brave Blue World](#), and an inspirational performance from [Musicality](#), a renowned Chicago-based group of young performers from various backgrounds who blend their power vocals into harmonic sounds and thrilling performances.

If you have an opening, you need a closing! New this year is a special closing session (#618, Room S401) on Wednesday, September 25 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. This fun and light-hearted wrap of the 2019 experience will include a "WEFTEC through the Years" performance from Kunetz and his friends from Chicago's famed Second City improv group.

Join thousands of your colleagues this September at WEFTEC 2019 | The Water Quality Event. [Register today!](#)

Note to editors: Complimentary registration for WEFTEC 2019 is available for credentialed media representatives. [Click here](#) for details.

###

About WEF

The Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization of 35,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. Since 1928, WEF and its members have protected public health and the environment. As a global water sector leader, our mission is to connect water professionals, enrich the expertise of water professionals, increase the awareness of the importance of water, and provide a platform for water sector innovation. Visit www.wef.org.