

Attachment L

**OPERATING AGREEMENT OF
CSWR-NORTH CAROLINA, LLC**

THIS OPERATING AGREEMENT (this "Agreement") is signed as of the 18th day of November, 2019 (the "Effective Date"), by CSWR, LLC, a Missouri limited liability company, as the sole Member of CSWR-NORTH CAROLINA, LLC, a North Carolina limited liability company (the "Company").

RECITALS

WHEREAS, on November 18, 2019, the Company was organized a limited liability company under the laws of North Carolina pursuant to the North Carolina Limited Liability Company Act, Chapter 57D (the "Act") for the purpose of, among other things, of investing in and operating water and waste water utilities;

WHEREAS, the aforementioned Member desires to adopt this Operating Agreement setting forth the Member's desire for the management and operation of such limited liability company.

NOW THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual covenants and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and legal sufficiency of which are hereby acknowledged, the Member hereby states as follows:

**ARTICLE I.
ORGANIZATION**

1.1. Certain Definitions. As used herein, the following terms have the following meanings:

- (a) "Act" is defined in Section 1.2 hereof.
- (b) "Agreement" means this Operating Agreement, as the same may be amended from time to time.
- (c) "Business Property" means all properties, assets and interests (whether real or personal, tangible or intangible) now or hereafter owned or held by the Company.
- (d) "Capital Account" means the Capital Account maintained by the Company for each Member in accordance with Treasury Regulations Section 1.704-1(b)(2)(iv), as amended from time to time.
- (e) "Capital Contributions" means with respect to the Member, the total amount of money and the fair market value of the other property, if any, to be contributed to the Company by the Member in accordance with Article II hereof. The Member's "Paid-In Capital Contribution" means the amount of the Member's Capital Contribution actually paid in cash or other property actually contributed to or on behalf of the Company. With respect to the Company, such terms shall mean the aggregate

Capital Contributions and aggregate Paid-In Capital Contributions, respectively, of the Member.

(f) "Capital Transaction" means any of the following items or transactions: a sale, transfer or other disposition of all or substantially all of the assets of the Company, condemnation actions, net insurance recoveries (other than for temporary loss of use), the refinancing of the mortgage or other indebtedness of the Company. The payment of Capital Contributions by the Member shall not be included within the meaning of the term "Capital Transaction."

(g) "Code" means the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended from time to time, or any successor statute.

(h) "Company" means this limited liability company and any successors hereto.

(i) "Depreciation" means for each fiscal year, an amount equal to the depreciation, amortization or other cost recovery deduction allowable with respect to an asset for such fiscal year. In the event the book value of an asset differs from its adjusted tax basis at the beginning of such year, then the Depreciation shall be an amount which bears the same ratio to the fair market value (as may be adjusted pursuant to Treasury Regulations Section 1.704-1(b)(2)(iv)(f) and (g)) as the Depreciation determined for federal income tax purposes bears to the beginning adjusted tax basis.

(j) "Dissolution Proceeds" is defined in Section 10.2 hereof.

(k) "Net Profits" or "Net Losses" for the applicable period means the gross income of the Company minus (a) all net cash outlays of any kind, whether capital in nature or not, to the extent the same are not depreciable or amortizable for federal income tax purposes (or, as the context may require, to the extent the same are not depreciated or amortized for federal income tax purposes), including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, all operating expenses payable by the Company, salaries, life insurance premiums on policies owned by the Company, and interest on any Company indebtedness; and (b) all Depreciation allowable for federal income tax purposes. In the event that such sum is a positive number, it shall be considered "Net Profits" and if the sum is a negative number, it shall be considered "Net Losses."

(l) "Person" is defined in Section 1.9 hereof.

(m) "Treasury Regulation(s)" means the Income Tax Regulations promulgated under the Code, as such Treasury Regulations may be amended or supplemented from time to time.

1.2. Formation. The Member has formed the Company under and pursuant to the provisions of the Act, for the limited purposes and scope set forth in this Agreement. The Member has filed in the appropriate governmental office(s) Articles of Organization which conform to the requirements of the Act in order to constitute the

Company as a valid limited liability company under the Act. The costs and expenses associated with such filing shall be borne by the Company.

1.3. Name. The business and affairs of the Company shall be conducted solely under the name of "**CSWR-North Carolina, LLC**", and such name shall be used at all times in connection with the business and affairs of the Company; provided that the Member may operate the Company under any other name necessary or convenient to qualify it to do business in any state or jurisdiction.

1.4. Term. The Company shall continue in existence perpetually, or until dissolved by the Member under the terms of this Agreement.

1.5. Business of the Company. The business of the Company is to: (i) invest in and operate water and waste water utilities; (ii) own, finance, hold, manage, manufacture, sell, exchange or otherwise deal with and dispose of all or any part of the Business Property; and (iii) transact any and all lawful business for which a limited liability company may be organized under the Act and exercise all rights and engage in all activities related thereto (the "Business").

1.6. Principal Office. The principal office of the Company shall be at 500 Northwest Plaza Drive, Suite 500, St. Ann, MO 63074, or such other location as may be hereafter determined by the Manager.

1.7. Registered Office and Registered Agent. The name of the Company's registered agent for service of process in North Carolina and the address of the Company's registered office in North Carolina shall be as provided in the Articles of Organization. The Manager may in his sole discretion and from time to time change the address of the registered office and the registered agent by filing the documents required by law.

1.8. Articles of Organization and Other Instruments. The Member has executed or has authorized the execution of the Articles of Organization in accordance with the Act, and shall execute such other documents and instruments and take all such other actions as may be deemed by the Manager to be necessary or appropriate to effectuate and permit the continuation of the Company under the laws of the State of North Carolina or the laws of any other state in any other state which the Member deems necessary or appropriate. The Manager shall, from time to time, take appropriate action, including the preparation and filing of such other amendments to the Articles of Organization and other certificates as may be required under the laws of the State of North Carolina or any other state, to enable the Company to do business in the State of North Carolina or any other state.

1.9. Additional Definitions. The definitions in Section 1.1 shall apply equally to both the singular and plural forms of the terms defined. Whenever the context may require, any pronoun used herein shall include the corresponding masculine, feminine and neuter forms. The term "Person" includes individuals, partnerships, corporations, limited liability companies, trusts, and other associations and entities. The words "include," "includes," and "including" shall be deemed to be followed by the phrase

"without limitation." The words "herein," "hereof," "hereunder," and similar terms shall refer to this Agreement, unless the context otherwise requires.

ARTICLE II. CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS

2.1. Initial Capital Contributions. The Member shall make the Capital Contribution to the Company as reflected on Exhibit A attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

ARTICLE III. DISTRIBUTIONS

3.1. Distributions. Except as otherwise requested by the Member or required by law, cash distributions shall be made to the Member on the following bases at such time (but at least annually) and in such amounts as the Manager in his sole discretion shall determine:

(a) Distributions, other than from a Capital Contribution, shall be made in the following order of priority:

(i) To the payment of liabilities of the Company then due and owing to Persons other than the Member;

(ii) To the Member, in an amount equal to the unpaid balance of principal and accrued interest of any loan by the Member to the Company;

(iii) The balance, if any, shall be distributed to the Member.

(b) The proceeds of any Capital Transaction and the distribution upon liquidation under Section 10.2 shall be made in the following order of priority:

(i) To the payment of liabilities of the Company then due and owing to Persons other than the Member;

(ii) To establish such reserves as the Manager in his discretion determines to be reasonably necessary for any contingent or foreseeable liability or obligation of the Company; provided, however, that the balance of any such reserve remaining at such time as the Manager shall reasonably determine shall be distributed in accordance with subparagraphs (iii) through (v) of this Section 3.1(b);

(iii) To the payment to the Member of an amount equal to the unpaid balance of principal and accrued interest of any Loan by the Member;

(iv) To the Member, an amount equal to its Capital Contributions reduced (but not below zero) by the amount of all prior distributions to it under this Section 3.1;

(v) The balance, if any, shall be distributed to the Member.

3.2. Distributions to Be Made In Cash. Unless otherwise determined by the Member, all distributions to the Member shall be made in cash.

**ARTICLE IV.
ALLOCATION OF NET PROFITS AND NET LOSSES**

4.1. Profits and Losses. Net Profits and Net Losses incurred and/or accrued shall be allocated to the Member.

**ARTICLE V.
ACCOUNTING; RECORDS**

5.1. Accounting Methods. The Company books and records shall be prepared in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles, consistently applied. All Federal, state and local tax returns of the Company shall be prepared by the Company's certified public accountants, under the direction of the Manager.

5.2. Fiscal Year. The fiscal year of the Company shall be the twelve calendar month period ending December 31.

5.3. Tax Status. The Member shall elect such tax status that it deems appropriate for each tax year by notifying the Manager of such election.

**ARTICLE VI.
POWERS, RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF THE MEMBER AND MANAGER**

6.1. Restriction of the Member's Rights to Participate in Management. Except as otherwise expressly provided herein, the Member shall have no voice in, take any part in, nor interfere with, the conduct, control, or management of the business of the Company in its capacity as the Member, nor shall the Member have any authority or power to act for, or on behalf of, the Company, or to bind the Company in any respect whatsoever.

6.2. Member Consent. (a) The affirmative vote, approval or consent of the Member shall be required to: (i) alter the primary purposes of the Company as set forth in Section 1.5; (ii) do any act in contravention of this Agreement or cause the Company to engage in any business not authorized by the Articles of Organization or the terms of this Agreement; (iii) do any act which would make it impossible to carry on the usual course of business of the Company; (iv) change or reorganize the Company into any other legal form; (v) amend this Agreement; (vi) issue an Interest in the Company to any Person and admit such Person as a Member; (vii) approve a merger or consolidation with another Person, (viii) change the status of the Company from one in which management is vested in the one or more Managers to one in which management is vested in the Member, or vice versa; (ix) possess any Company property or assign the rights of the Company in specific Company property for other than a Company purpose; (x) perform any act (other than an act required by this Agreement or any act taken in good faith reliance upon counsel's opinion) which would, at the time such act occurred, subject the Member to liability as a general

partner in any jurisdiction; (xi) operate the Company in such a manner as to have the Company classified as an "investment company" for purposes of the Investment Company Act of 1940; (xii) have an order for relief entered against the Company under applicable federal bankruptcy law; OR (xiii) file a voluntary petition in bankruptcy or a petition or an answer seeking reorganization or an arrangement with creditors or taking advantage of any insolvency law or any answer admitting the material allegations of a petition filed against the Company in any bankruptcy, reorganization or insolvency proceeding.

(b) The Member shall have the right to replace a Manager of the Company and name its successor at any time by providing written notice to the Manager being replaced of such decision in which the successor Manager is also set forth.

6.3. Manager.

(a) The Manager shall have the power to do all things necessary or convenient to carry out the business affairs of the Company. The initial Manager shall be Central States Water Resources, Inc., a Missouri corporation.

(b) The Manager shall not have any contractual right to such position and shall serve until the earliest of (i) the withdrawal of the Manager, or (ii) the removal of the Manager. The Manager may be removed and replaced in accordance with the provisions of Section 6.2(b).

(c) Except to the extent provided herein, the Member hereby agrees that only the Manager and agents of the Company authorized by the Manager shall have the authority to bind the Company. The Member shall not take any action to bind the Company without notifying the Manager of such action. If the Member takes any action to bind the Company, it shall indemnify and hold harmless the Manager against any claim, loss, expense or liability (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees and expenses, whether or not litigation is commenced) incurred by the Manager as a result of the unauthorized action of such Member.

(d) The Manager's duty of care in the discharge of the duties of the Manager to the Company and the Member is limited to discharging his duties pursuant to this Agreement in good faith, with the care a corporate officer of like position would exercise under similar circumstances, in the manner he reasonably believes to be in the best interests of the Company. In discharging his duties, the Manager shall not be liable to the Company or to the Member for any mistake or error in judgment or for any act or omission believed in good faith to be within the scope of authority conferred by this Agreement or by separate written instrument executed by the Member.

(e) The Manager's compensation shall be established by the Member, and the Manager shall be entitled to reimbursement of any general overhead expenses incurred in the regular course of his duties.

6.4. Indemnification

(a) The Company, except as provided in Section 6.4(b), shall indemnify any Person who is or was a party or is threatened to be made a party to any threatened, pending or completed action, suit or proceeding, whether criminal, civil, administrative or investigative, including without limitation any action by or in the right of the Company, by reason of the fact that he/it was or is a Member or Manager of the Company or is or was a Member or Manager of the Company who is or was serving at the request of the Company as a member, manager, director, officer, agent, employee, partner or trustee of another limited liability company, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise; against expenses, including attorneys' fees, judgments, fines, taxes and amounts paid in settlement, actually and reasonably incurred by him in connection with such action, suit or proceeding if such Person's conduct is not finally adjudged to be knowingly fraudulent, deliberately dishonest or willful misconduct. The right to indemnification conferred in this paragraph shall be a contract right and shall include the right to be paid by the Company expenses incurred in defending any actual or threatened civil or criminal action, suit or proceeding in advance of the final disposition of such action, suit or proceeding. Such right will be conditioned upon receipt of an undertaking by or on behalf of the Member or manager to repay such amount if it shall ultimately be determined that he/it is not entitled to be indemnified by the Company as authorized in this Article. Such right shall survive any amendment or repeal of this Article with respect to expenses incurred in connection with claims, regardless of when such claims are brought, arising out of acts or omissions occurring prior to such amendment or repeal. The Company may, by action of the Member, provide indemnification to employees and agents of the Company with the same scope and effect as the foregoing indemnification of Member and Manager.

(b) If a claim under Section 6.4(a) is not paid in full by the Company within thirty (30) days after a written claim has been received by the Company, the claimant may at any time thereafter bring suit against the Company to recover the unpaid amount of the claim and, if successful in whole or in part, the claimant shall be entitled to be paid also the expense, including reasonable attorneys' fees and costs, of prosecuting such claim. It shall be a defense to any such action (other than an action brought to enforce a claim for expenses incurred in defending any proceeding in advance of its final disposition where the required undertaking, if any is required, has been tendered to the Company) that the claimant has not met the standards of conduct which make it permissible under the limited liability company law of North Carolina for the Company to indemnify the claimant for the amount claimed, but the burden of proving such defense shall be on the Company. Neither the failure of the Company (including the Member or independent legal counsel) to have made a determination prior to the commencement of such action that indemnification of the claimant is proper in the circumstances because he/it has met the applicable standard of conduct set forth in the limited liability company law of North Carolina, nor an actual determination by the Company (including its Member or independent legal counsel) that the claimant has not met such applicable standard of conduct, shall be a defense to the action or create a presumption that the claimant has not met the applicable standard of conduct.

(c) The indemnification provided by this Section 6.4 shall not be deemed exclusive of any other rights to which those seeking indemnification may be entitled under any agreement, consent of the Member or otherwise, both as to action in his/its official capacity and as to action in another capacity while holding such office, and shall continue as to a Person who has ceased to be a Member, Manager, employee, partner, trustee or agent and shall inure to the benefit of the heirs, executors and administrators of such a Person.

(d) The Company may purchase and maintain insurance on behalf of any Person who is or was a Member, Manager, employee or agent of the Company, or is or was serving at the request of the Company as a member, manager, director, officer, employee, partner, trustee or agent of another limited liability company, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise against any liability asserted against him and incurred by him in any such capacity or arising out of his/its status as such, whether or not the Company would have the power to indemnify him against such liability under the provisions of this Section 6.4.

(e) For the purposes of this Section 6.4, references to the Company includes the resulting or surviving entity in any merger or consolidation so that any Person who is or was a Member, Manager, employee or agent of such a constituent entity or is or was serving at the request of such constituent entity as a member, manager, director, officer, employee, partner, trustee or agent of another limited liability company, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise shall stand in the same position under the provisions of this Section 6.4 with respect to the resulting or surviving entity as he/it would if he/it had served the resulting or surviving entity in the same capacity.

(f) For purposes of this Section 6.4, the term "other enterprise" shall include employee benefit plans; the term "fines" shall include any excise taxes assessed on a Person with respect to any employee benefit plan; and the term "serving at the request of the Company" shall include any service as a member, manager, director, officer, employee, partner, trustee or agent of, or at the request of, the Company which imposes duties on, or involves services by, such member, manager, director, officer, employee, partner, trustee or agent with respect to an employee benefit plan, its participants, or beneficiaries.

(g) In the event any provision of this Section 6.4 shall be held invalid by any court of competent jurisdiction, such holding shall not invalidate any other provision of this Section 6.4 and any other provisions of this Section 6.4 shall be construed as if such invalid provision had not been contained in this Section 6.4. In any event, the Company shall indemnify any Person who is or was a Member or Manager of the Company, or is or was a Member or Manager of the Company who is or was serving at the request of the Company as a member, manager, director, officer, agent, employee, partner or trustee of another limited liability company, corporation, partnership, joint venture, trust or other enterprise, to the full extent permitted under North Carolina law, as from time to time in effect.

6.5. Liability of the Member. The Member shall not be liable as such for the liabilities of the Company. The failure of the Company to observe any formalities or

requirements relating to the exercise of its powers or management of its business or affairs under this Agreement or the Act shall not be grounds for imposing personal liability on the Member or a Manager for liabilities of the Company.

**ARTICLE VII.
DETERMINATIONS BY THE MEMBER**

7.1. Actions by the Member. The Member shall have the right to take any action set forth herein in accordance with the terms of the Agreement. In addition, if the Member determines that it wants to take an action that is not expressly granted to it within this Agreement, it shall take such action only after notifying the Manager in writing of the intended action.

**ARTICLE VIII.
ACTIONS OF THE MANAGER**

8.1. Actions by the Manager. The Manager shall decide any question related to the operations of the Company, unless the question is one upon which, by express provision of the Act, the Articles of Organization or this Agreement, the Member is required to consent, in which case such express provision shall govern and control the decision on such question.

**ARTICLE IX.
TRANSFER OF MEMBER'S INTEREST**

9.1. Transfer of Member's Interest. The Member shall have the right to transfer all or part of its Interest to another Person upon such terms that the Member deems acceptable. Prior to the effective date of the transfer of all or part of the Interest, the Member must notify the Manager of the transfer in writing.

9.2. Effect of Assignment; Documents. All Interests in the Company transferred pursuant to the provisions of this Article shall be subject to the restrictions and obligations set forth in this Agreement. As a condition to any Person being admitted as an additional Member or a substituted Member, such Person must execute this Agreement and agree to be bound by all of its terms and provisions as a substituted Member or additional Member.

**ARTICLE X.
DISSOLUTION OF THE COMPANY**

10.1. Dissolution Acts.

(a) No act, thing, occurrence, event or circumstance shall cause or result in the dissolution of the Company except that the happening of any one of the following events shall work as an immediate dissolution and termination of the Company:

(i) A determination by Member to dissolve and terminate the Company; and

(ii) The event of the death of the Member.

(b) Without limiting the other provisions hereof, the transfer of all or any part of a Member's Interest, in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement or the admission of a new Member, shall not work the dissolution of the Company.

10.2. Distribution of Proceeds on Dissolution; Reserves. Upon the dissolution and termination of the Company, a the Member or such other Person designated by the Member (the "Winding-Up Member") shall file a Notice of Winding Up pursuant to the Act and shall proceed with the liquidation and termination of the Company as promptly as possible, but in an orderly and businesslike manner so as not to involve undue sacrifice, and the proceeds therefrom and any other funds and assets of the Company (the "Dissolution Proceeds"), shall be applied and distributed pursuant to the provisions of Section 3.1.b.

**ARTICLE XI.
GENERAL**

11.1. Notices. Any notice, request, approval, consent, demand or other communication required or permitted hereunder shall be given in writing by (1) personal delivery, (2) expedited delivery service with proof of delivery, (3) United States Mail, postage prepaid, registered or certified mail, return receipt requested, or (4) email or facsimile (provided that such email or facsimile is confirmed as received), and shall be deemed to have been given and received either at the time of personal delivery or, in the case of delivery service or mail, as of the date of first attempted delivery at the last known address, or in the case of email or facsimile, upon receipt.

11.2. Amendments. This Agreement may be amended by a written agreement of amendment executed by the Member.

11.3. Miscellaneous. Except as herein otherwise specifically provided, this Agreement shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the parties and their respective heirs, legal representatives, successors and assigns. Captions contained in this Agreement in no way define, limit, or extend the scope or intent of this Agreement. If any provision of this Agreement or the application of such provision to any Person or circumstance shall be held invalid, the remainder of this Agreement, or the application of such provision to any other Persons or circumstances, shall not be affected thereby.

11.4. Remedies. If the Company or any party to this Agreement obtains a judgment against any other party by reason of breach of this Agreement or failure to comply with the provisions hereof, reasonable attorneys' fees as fixed by the court shall be included in such judgment. No remedy conferred upon the Company or the Member in this Agreement is intended to be exclusive of any other remedy herein or by law provided or permitted, but each shall be cumulative and shall be in addition to every other remedy given hereunder or now or hereafter existing at law or in equity or by statute. No waiver by the Member or the Company of any breach of this Agreement shall be deemed to be a waiver of any other breach of any kind or nature and no acceptance of payment or performance by a Member or the Company after any such

breach shall be deemed to be a waiver of any breach of this Agreement, whether or not such Member or the Company knows of such breach at the time it accepts such payment or performance. If the Member has the right herein to approve or consent to any matter or transaction, such approval or consent may be withheld in the sole discretion of the Member for any reason or no reason. No failure or delay on the part of the Member or the Company to exercise any right it may have shall prevent the exercise thereof by the Member or the Company at any time such other may continue to be so in default, and no such failure or delay shall operate as a waiver of any default.

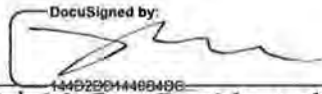
11.5. Compliance with Securities Laws. Notwithstanding anything herein contained to the contrary, no transfer or disposition of Interests in the Company pursuant to the terms hereof shall be made unless such transfer or disposition complies in all respects with the provisions of the Securities Act of 1933 and the securities laws of any and all states with jurisdiction over such transfer or disposition, and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder.

11.6. Binding Effect. This Agreement and any amendment hereto made as provided herein shall be binding upon and inure to the benefit of the Company and its successors and assigns, and the Member, its heirs, executors, administrators, and legal or personal representatives.

11.7. Governing Law. This Agreement and the rights of the parties hereunder shall be governed by and interpreted in accordance with the laws of the State of North Carolina.

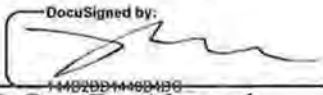
IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned has executed this Agreement as of the date first above written.

CSWR, LLC

By: 

14B2B01448B49C
Josiah M. Cox, President of
Central States Water Resources, Inc.,
Manager

Agreed and Accepted by:



14B2B01448B49C
Josiah M. Cox, President of
Central States Water Resources, Inc.,
Manager

**EXHIBIT A
INITIAL CAPITAL CONTRIBUTIONS**

<u>Member's Name and Address</u>	<u>Member's Interest</u>	<u>Capital Contribution</u>
CSWR, LLC	100%.	Kept by Company Accountant

OFFICIAL COPY

Sep 30 2021