Running Dry
It’s easy to take the widespread availability of water for granted. But as droughts persist and consumption rises, businesses must secure their water supply—or risk increasing costs and shrinking resources.

The World Economic Forum ranks water third among top global risks—after fiscal crises [1] and structurally high unemployment [2].

Resource Woes
79% of U.S. companies say they currently face water challenges, including an insufficient supply, pollution, contaminated drinking water, crumbling infrastructure and degraded ecosystems.

Sources: World Economic Forum, Ernst & Young, Vie GlobalPacific Institute, Cokes, Indiana-Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Anderson Economic Group, Ford, USDA

DataPoints
Forward’s look at water as a diminishing industrial resource

Insights From Indiana
The Anderson Economic Group, a Michigan-based consulting firm, analyzed census data to determine the percentage of each state’s employment in water-intensive industries, finding the greatest concentrations in the Great Lakes region. Though agriculture accounts for 88% of U.S. water consumption, it supports a smaller fraction of jobs than manufacturing. Indiana’s economy, heavy on manufacturing and other water-intensive jobs, turned out to be particularly reliant on water.

The state’s national ranking in water-related employment as a percentage of total jobs...

...which equates to nearly $70 billion in annual economic activity

Mitigation in Action
Cummins, a Columbus, Indiana-based designer and manufacturer of diesel and natural gas engines, launched a water management strategy in 2011, determining how each facility uses and discharges water, interacts with local watersheds and impacts the company’s overall footprint. Then, Cummins measured and managed water use at each site.

Reduction in Cummins’ global water consumption since implementing its water management system...

Ford in Focus
At its 82 plant locations worldwide, the automaker has been cutting water use for over a decade. Its strategies include minimizing water consumption at Ford facilities; using alternative, lower-quality water sources; meeting wastewater discharge standards; and investing in water technology, such as reverse-osmosis systems, based on local water scarcity and cost effectiveness.

Reduction in water used per vehicle produced by Ford between 2012 and 2013...

...that’s 10.6 billion gallons

Sources: World Economic Forum, Ernst & Young, Vie GlobalPacific Institute, Cokes, Indiana-Indiana Chamber of Commerce, Anderson Economic Group, Ford, USDA