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Ken Kirk

December 18, 2008

The Honorable James L. Oberstar, Chair
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chair
Committee on Environment and Public Works
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Oberstar and Chairwoman Boxer:

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) commends your important work on economic recovery legislation and would like to provide some input regarding the need to include green infrastructure provisions as the bill progresses. NACWA has already gone on the record seeking the inclusion of \$10 billion in grants per year for ready-to-go wastewater infrastructure projects to help municipalities address the \$300-500 billion water and wastewater funding gap reported by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Water Infrastructure Network (WIN). We also support a set aside of up to 15 percent to be used by States for the implementation of green infrastructure projects as well as the monitoring of such projects once completed to assess their water quality benefits.

NACWA estimates that a 15 percent set-aside could potentially generate more than 50,000 green jobs in our communities. It would help states and municipalities nationwide advance innovative natural system solutions that optimize water conservation goals; incorporate stormwater management techniques that preserve, restore or mimic the natural hydrology, such as rain gardens and green roofs; and/or capture and reuse excess methane for energy recovery. Though often not a replacement for traditional infrastructure upgrades, green techniques can reduce susceptibility to floods, fires, and other natural disasters, and help mitigate overflows from combined and separate sewers. Green infrastructure is already being used effectively by cities such as San Francisco, Chicago, Portland, Seattle, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia.

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If done the right way, green infrastructure can provide a blueprint for conservation and create an agenda for growth while ensuring that significant natural resources will be preserved for future generations. It is an essential component of smart growth planning and its inclusion in the economic recovery package will help in addressing the growing \$300-500 billion water and wastewater funding gap.

We have attached for your review an updated list of ready-to-go green infrastructure projects compiled from public agencies across the country and also encourages you to contact American Rivers, which has generated its own list of ready-to-go green infrastructure projects.

Again, NACWA applauds your leadership in seeking to ensure that our Nation's critical wastewater infrastructure is an integral part of stimulus package discussions, and that green infrastructure projects are considered for funding. For additional information, please contact Pat Sinicropi at 202/833-1823 or psinicropi@nacwa.org or Byron DeLuke at 202/833-4655 or bdeluke@nacwa.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Kirk". The "K" is large and stylized, with the first name "Kirk" written in a cursive script to its right.

Ken Kirk
Executive Director
National Association of Clean Water Agencies