

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 22, 2008

The Honorable Robert C. Byrd  
Chairman, Senate Appropriations  
Committee  
S-131 Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran  
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations  
Committee  
S-146A Capitol Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,  
Environment, and Related Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Wayne Allard  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on  
Interior, Environment, and Related  
Agencies  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
125 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Byrd, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Feinstein, and Ranking Member Allard:

As you work on drafting the economic recovery package to be introduced early in the 111<sup>th</sup> Congress, we encourage you to prioritize funding for the country's aging sewer and water infrastructure. Specifically, we ask that you include \$20 billion in the stimulus package for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and \$5 billion for the Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund. These critical investments will serve to stimulate economic growth, provide jobs, improve infrastructure for new business development, and protect the public health and environment.

There is a severe backlog of water infrastructure projects around the country. With a one-time influx of funding, we can commence thousands of projects, totaling billions of dollars. These projects can quickly return benefits to local communities and their residents, employ workers in the ailing construction industry, help keep property taxes down, and make positive long-term investments for communities' continued growth and sustainability.

The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there is a \$500 billion "needs gap" to meet our water and wastewater infrastructure needs and to comply with current unfunded mandates. Funding the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRFs in the economic recovery package would take huge strides towards closing this gap.

This funding will be incredibly important to state and local governments, as the burden of maintaining water and wastewater infrastructure falls on them. Water and wastewater

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infrastructure are second only to transportation infrastructure as municipalities' largest assets. Currently, local governments contribute 98 percent of the total investment in wastewater and 95 percent of the water infrastructure investment. We encourage you to ensure that, in any funding targeted to water in the stimulus, you include the flexibility to allow municipalities to deploy this funding over the course of two years as many communities will need time to fill the jobs that jumpstarting these backlogged projects would necessitate.

Thank you for your work towards restoring the health of our country's economy and environment. We urge you to incorporate robust water and wastewater infrastructure as part of your stimulus plans.

Sincerely,

Chuck Sch

George V. Voinovich

Frank R. Lautenberg

Susan M. Collins

Jon Kyl

Olympia Snowe

Carl Levin

John F. Kerry

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