

June 23, 2009

Representative Lois Capps
1110 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Capps:

On behalf of the undersigned environmental and conservation groups, we want to express our support for the Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act of 2009 (H.R. 2969), which would establish a grant program through which the nation's water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities could compete for funding to design, plan, construct, and implement projects that help them adapt to water resources challenges posed by global climate change. We support this grant program because of the very serious impacts that global warming has on water resources and infrastructure and the need for federal assistance to communities in meeting that new set of challenges in addition to the backlog of current water, wastewater, and stormwater needs.

As you are aware, global climate change is expected to lead to a host of challenges for local water and wastewater utilities, ranging from severe drought and melting snowpack that stresses water supplies to increased heavy precipitation events and rising sea levels that threaten water quality. However, H.R. 2454, the American Clean Energy and Security Act, includes no direct mechanism to help water and wastewater utilities adapt their operations to these challenges. The Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act of 2009 would strengthen the bill by offering competitive grants to help water, wastewater, and stormwater utilities undertake water conservation and efficiency efforts, source water protection and green infrastructure projects, increase energy efficiency, advanced water treatment or water supply or demand management, and utility-specific evaluations to estimate how climate change will impact their sustainability. All projects would need to be consistent with state climate adaptation plans, which are also to be consistent with state natural resources adaptation plans developed under Section 479 of H.R. 2454.

It is our understanding that you are seeking to have this bill incorporated into H.R. 2454 during floor debate on this legislation. We fully support this effort and believe that H.R. 2454 would be strengthened by the addition of this measure. We have also been informed by the water and wastewater utilities that they support and will work toward enactment of H.R. 2454 if it includes this language. We are delighted to work in partnership with them and with your leadership to make water, wastewater, and stormwater systems more resilient to the impacts of global warming.

H.R. 2454 is the strongest and most comprehensive bill ever to gain such widespread support in the House. We need to enact this bill in both chambers of Congress if we are to take meaningful steps to curb the pollution that is disrupting our climate.

Thank you for your leadership on this issue. We urge all members of the House to support you in your efforts to amend H.R. 2454 to reflect these improvements.

Sincerely,

Nancy Stoner, Co-Director
Natural Resources Defense Council (DC)

John Kostyack, Executive Director
Wildlife Conservation and Global Warming
National Wildlife Federation (DC)

Ed Hopkins
Director, Environmental Quality Program
Sierra Club (DC)

Jeffrey Odefey, Staff Attorney
Waterkeeper Alliance (NY)

Andrew Fahlund, Senior Vice President for Conservation
American Rivers (DC)

Cindy Lowry, Executive Director
Alabama Rivers Alliance (AL)

Mike Daulton, Legislative Director
National Audubon Society

Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director
Citizens Campaign for the Environment (NY & CT)

Paul Schwartz, National Policy Coordinator
Clean Water Action (DC)

Rachel Conn, Policy Analyst
Amigos Bravos, Friends of the Wild Rivers (NM)

Cynthia Sarthou, Executive Director
Gulf Restoration Network (LA)

Natalie Roy, Executive Director
Clean Water Network (DC)

Eric Haxthausen, Director of US Climate Policy
The Nature Conservancy

cc: Rep. Henry Waxman, Rep. Edward Markey