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July 10, 2009

The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chair  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable James M. Inhofe, Ranking Member  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Boxer and Ranking Member Inhofe:

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) urges your support for incorporating *The Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act of 2009* (H.R. 2969) into the comprehensive climate change legislation that your committee is developing. H.R. 2969 would establish a program by which the nation's water and wastewater utilities could compete for funding to design, plan, construct, and implement projects that help them adapt to water resources challenges posed by climate change. We support this funding program because of the very serious impacts that global warming will have on water resources and infrastructure and the need for federal assistance to communities in meeting this new set of challenges — challenges that are above and beyond the current and growing backlog of water, wastewater, and stormwater needs.

As you are aware, 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, the *American Clean Energy and Security Act* (H.R. 2454), as passed by the House, includes no direct mechanism to help water and wastewater utilities adapt their operations to these challenges. The *Water System Adaptation Partnership Act of 2009* addresses this shortcoming by offering competitive grants to help water and wastewater utilities undertake capital projects to improve water quality, water conservation and efficiency efforts in a climate-driven environment while also helping to fund utility-specific evaluations to estimate how climate change will impact their sustainability.

Water and wastewater utilities, including the thirty NACWA member agencies from California, already struggle to meet current demands placed on water infrastructure systems. According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), a \$534 billion

**Senate Environment and Public Works**

**July 10, 2009**

**Page 2 of 2**

gap exists between current investment in water and wastewater infrastructure and projected needs over the next 20 years. Climate change will only exacerbate this crisis and NACWA looks forward to working with you and your staff to ensure that comprehensive climate legislation that addresses the devastating impacts climate change will have on our water resources is enacted by this Congress.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have further questions or want more information about the impacts of climate change on wastewater and drinking water utilities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Kirk".

Ken Kirk

Executive Director

Cc: Members, Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works