

SHERROD BROWN  
OHIO

COMMITTEES:  
AGRICULTURE, NUTRITION,  
AND FORESTRY  
BANKING, HOUSING,  
AND URBAN AFFAIRS  
HEALTH, EDUCATION,  
LABOR, AND PENSIONS  
VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
SELECT COMMITTEE ON ETHICS

## United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 30, 2011

The Honorable Lisa Jackson  
Administrator  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Jackson:

For some time now, I have raised the importance of investing in our water systems to ensure that all communities have systems that provide communities with clean water in a sustainable and achievable manner.

Ohio faces enormous clean water challenges including the need to comply with consent decrees covering combined sewer overflow (CSOs) systems in 81 communities—from major metropolitan areas like Cleveland, Cincinnati and Toledo to midsize cities like Lima and Portsmouth and even small villages like Bascom. According to the most recent EPA Needs Report, cleaning up CSOs in Ohio over the next 20 years could cost at least \$6 billion. With needs far outpacing financing from EPA's State Revolving Fund, ratepayers in Ohio are being asked to pay for these additional clean water investments with little or no federal or state help. As a result, it is my understanding that wastewater utility rates are scheduled to rise at double the rate of inflation— one more burden for an already stressed ratepayer base.

That's why I have previously worked with colleagues in both parties to assist municipalities facing costly, but necessary, compliance orders requiring that they correct combined sewer overflows under the Clean Water Act (CWA). Now, I stand ready to work with you on this critical issue. Helping communities comply with the CWA must be done affordably while ensuring continual and consistent environmental progress.

It is my understanding that there have been serious discussions between the EPA and key stakeholders about CWA permitting options that would allow communities to better meet water quality related mandates. I appreciate this common sense effort that enables the EPA to work collaboratively with Ohio municipalities to develop compliance schedules that maximize environmental gains in. I believe that EPA and key state and local organizations can reach agreement on the technical and policy related issues regarding CSOs, and I urge the EPA to establish a realistic deadline for an official EPA memorandum outlining the elements of this improved permitting process. Cities and towns of all sizes face an uncertain economic environment and by setting an aggressive timeline for this proposal we can continue the gains made under the Clean Water Act.

Progress under the Clean Water Act must continue. I know that communities throughout Ohio stand ready to work with the EPA to ensure that these vital regulations can be met over a reasonable period of time, in a manner that they can afford.

I invite you to Ohio, and look forward to working with you and your staff on efforts that can immediately be taken to help communities prioritize their clean water obligations in a common-sense way.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Sherrod Brown". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator