NACWA
A Clear Commitment to America's Waters

Statement of the
National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA)

The Obama Administration's
Climate Change Policies and Activities

Committee on Energy and Commerce
Subcommittee on Energy and Power
U.S. House of Representatives
September 18, 2013

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) is pleased to have the opportunity to provide the House Subcommittee on Energy and Power with comments for the record in connection with the Committee's hearing entitled, "The Obama Administration's Climate Change Policies and Activities."

NACWA represents the interests of more than 350 municipally owned wastewater treatment agencies and organizations. Our members are dedicated environmental stewards who treat and reclaim more than 18 billion gallons of wastewater each day while working to carry out the goals of the Clean Water Act.

NACWA would like to thank the Subcommittee for holding this hearing to consider the President's Climate Action Plan (CAP). Climate change poses one of the most significant challenges to America's wastewater sector, and it is vital that communities facing more frequent and extreme weather get the support they need to build resilient wastewater systems. It is also important to consider the wastewater sector when looking at opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Adapting to the Effects of Climate Change and Improving Utility Resilience

In many ways, climate change is all about water—either there will be too much in wetter regions or not enough in dry regions — which is forcing our wastewater managers to become key first responders to climate-related events. As we witnessed with Hurricanes Katrina, Irene, and Sandy, flooding, sea level rise, and storm surges can lead to severe service disruptions at wastewater treatment plants and billions of gallons of sewage overflows. In the southwest, where drought conditions threaten to dry up many water supplies, communities are reclaiming wastewater to meet demand.

Improving the resilience of wastewater treatment plants in wet weather areas will involve raising pump stations, developing alternative treatment systems, having backup power generation capacity, building additional storage capacity, and potentially relocating treatment facilities above floodplains. It is also critical to understand that when basic water and wastewater infrastructure is offline, business and industrial disruptions are inevitable causing serious economic impacts

In regions where extreme drought conditions persist, wastewater reuse and recycling operations will need to be expanded and improved. Warmer water conditions may cause water quality

degradation which may lead to more stringent and more costly treatment standards for wastewater discharges. Such actions to mitigate or adapt to changing weather patterns will be very expensive for local ratepayers and a 2009 report released by NACWA and the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) estimates these resilience-related costs could reach between $448 billion and $944 billion by mid-century.

NACWA urges Congress to integrate considerations of climate change impacts and adaptive measures into water-related infrastructure investment programs such as the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). NACWA also supports the establishment of a State, Local, and Tribal Leaders Task Force on Climate Preparedness and urges that at least one representative from the wastewater sector be included in this task force to advise on how best the federal government can support local preparedness and resilience-building efforts.

Reducing Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Promoting Energy Efficiency and Achieving Energy Independence

The wastewater sector stands ready to become partners with Congress and