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Ken Kirk

February 20, 2014

The Honorable Steve Chabot
2371 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Chabot,

The National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) is pleased to support H.R. 2707, *The Clean Water Compliance and Ratepayer Affordability Act of 2013*, designed to ensure that the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Integrated Planning initiative to assist communities meet their regulatory obligations under the Clean Water Act (CWA) receives an opportunity to be effectively implemented.

EPA unveiled the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework (Framework) to help communities meet their regulatory obligations under the Clean Water Act in a prioritized and sustainable manner. Under the integrated planning approach, communities can create a realistic schedule of priority projects for wastewater and stormwater permit obligations to ensure available funds go to those projects yielding the greatest water quality benefit first.

H.R. 2707 would create a new pilot program for 15 communities across the country to work with EPA to develop integrated plans that best meet each participating community's particular needs. The pilot program would also encourage approved local communities to pursue innovative and cost-effective approaches to meet the CWA standards and facilitate flexible compliance solutions by extending CWA permit terms up to 25 years for pilot communities with an approved integrated plan.

The approach outlined in this legislation complements the bi-partisan efforts of Congressman Bob Latta and Tim Walz who introduced *The Clean Water Affordability Act* (H.R.3862), as well as efforts that you and other members have supported on behalf of funding for EPA to move forward with a pilot community project under the Integrated Planning initiative. All three efforts help focus attention on the importance of addressing CWA affordability concerns at the community level by providing meaningful tools to support communities struggling with these challenges.

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Communities in Ohio and around the country are under enormous financial pressure to maintain critical services for their residents, including education, fire and safety and critical public health infrastructure including drinking water and clean water. Supporting communities that want to take advantage of EPA's Integrated Planning initiative to ensure ratepayers are getting the biggest bang for their buck — as your bill does — will help ensure this approach is successful.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Kirk". The signature is written in a cursive, fluid style.

Ken Kirk
Executive Director