

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 9, 2014

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Reed and Ranking Member Murkowski:

We are writing to seek **\$15 million** in appropriations in the FY2015 Interior Subcommittee for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to establish a pilot project to assist communities implement a new model for meeting Clean Water Act (CWA) obligations.

After months of stakeholder input, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released its Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework (Framework) outlining an innovative, new model to help communities meet their regulatory obligations under the CWA. If successfully implemented, the Framework could reduce rate increases on communities while ensuring that clean water responsibilities are met.

For this model to succeed, however, communities must develop an Integrated Plan outlining water quality goals, human health and regulatory issues that must be addressed, an assessment of existing systems, an evaluation of a communities' financial capability, an evaluation of cost-effective approaches for addressing identified issues, metrics to measure success, and a process for incorporating adaptive management techniques. States and the EPA would evaluate and approve Integrated Plans with final implementation remaining in the hands of the municipality. The core purpose of an Integrated Plan is to enable communities to establish CWA regulatory priorities and implementation schedules that are affordable for ratepayers.

The requested funding would help three to five communities in each EPA region develop Integrated Plans. Such an approach would ensure that all areas of the country participate in this effort while enabling this new model for meeting CWA obligations to be effectively evaluated nationwide.

An Integrated Planning approach to CWA obligations can potentially save ratepayers millions of dollars while focusing clean water investments in a way that ensures the greatest water-quality benefit. As you well know, communities 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. EPA should be applauded for proposing a new model for helping communities meet their regulatory obligations under the CWA. With additional assistance from Congress, we can ensure that this new model succeeds. The suggested language for the Integrated Planning Pilot Program is attached.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown



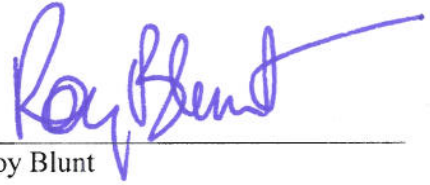
Tom Harkin



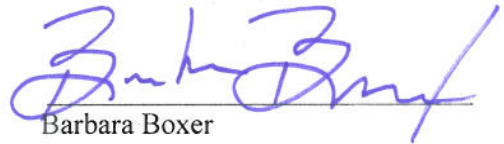
Sheldon Whitehouse



Brian Schatz



Roy Blunt



Barbara Boxer



Kirsten Gillibrand



Mazie Hirono

Conference Report Language in Support of Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework:

Of the amount provided, the Committee expects the Administrator to use \$15 million in grants to publicly owned treatment works and/or Separate Storm Sewer Systems and/or units of local government to provide funding and technical assistance to develop and seek approval for integrated plans in accordance with the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework. The Administrator should select three to five publicly owned treatment works and/or Municipal Separate Storm Sewer Systems and/or units of local government in each region, ensuring geographic and size distribution in selection. In conjunction with this effort, the Committee asks the Administrator to notify Congress once pilot communities are identified and submit a report to Congress within twelve months of enactment on progress of effort, outlining specific outcomes expected to be achieved that will reduce Clean Water Act-related and other environmental-related compliance costs for these entities, and a final report to Congress once all plans are approved. The funds awarded to communities shall be awarded on a fifty percent cost-share basis.