

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March, 26, 2015

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

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

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We are writing to urge you to support the Administration's request to include \$13 million in the FY2016 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies appropriations bill for a pilot project to assist communities successfully implement plans under the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Integrated Planning Initiative.

The Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework (Framework) outlines a flexible new approach to help communities meet their regulatory obligations under the Clean Water Act. If successfully implemented, the Framework could benefit ratepayers and help communities more affordably manage their clean water responsibilities while maintaining water quality standards.

For this approach to succeed, however, communities must develop an Integrated Plan outlining water quality goals, human health and regulatory issues that they need to address, 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 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 and we are pleased that EPA submitted this request in its budget. We urge your support for it.

Sincerely,




Sherrod Brown
U. S. Senator



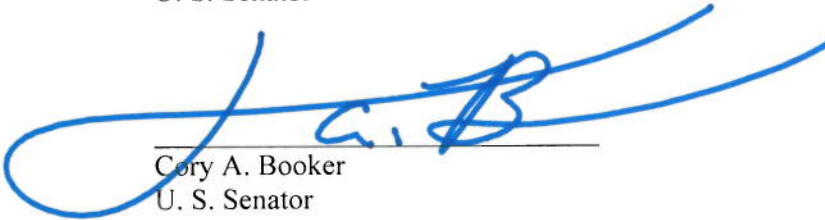
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