

April - 2015

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
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

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
Appropriations Committee
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Murkowski, Chairman Calvert, Senator Udall and Representative McCollum:

As Congress prepares the Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Appropriations bill for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), we urge you to maintain full funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) at \$1.450 billion, and provide \$25 million for the Water Infrastructure Financing Innovations Act and \$13 million for Integrated Planning pilot initiative to ensure communities have sufficient resources to meet their obligations under the Clean Water Act (CWA).

The CWSRF is a key pillar of the Federal government's commitment to help ensure clean water is available to all Americans. It has provided over \$100 billion in low-cost financing to communities since it was established in 1987 and it is the only federal program that provides low-cost financing for any sized community to help meet obligations under the CWA. Just last year, Congress renewed its commitment to the CWSRF when it overhauled key program features.

The need for significant investment in our water and wastewater infrastructure continues to outpace current resources. The American Society of Civil Engineer's 2013 Report Card on America's Infrastructure grades the state of wastewater infrastructure at a D. Indeed, over the past year, headlines across the country have reported physical injuries as well as transportation and business disruptions caused by major water and sewer main breaks. The latest EPA data indicate that communities need \$300 billion over the next twenty years for investment in the basic infrastructure (pipes and treatment plants) that delivers clean water and protects public health to their residents.

In addition to the daunting investment challenge needed to replace and upgrade basic infrastructure, communities face increased CWA regulatory and enforcement pressures on a host

of issues that only exacerbate the investment challenge. These pressures include wet weather enforcement, pre-treatment standards for dental offices, more stringent standards related to nutrient pollution, and new Clean Air Act standards for sludge disposal. Now is not the time to cut spending for the CWSRF.

Last year, Congress established the WIFIA program as a way to leverage additional capital to help with this financing challenge. WIFIA is viewed as a supplement and not a replacement to the CWSRF, and funding for it should not come at the expense of the CWSRF, however authorizing \$25 million for WIFIA in FY16 will enable communities to begin accessing this capital as quickly as possible.

Recognizing that daunting infrastructure investment challenges coupled with increased regulatory pressures is leading to affordability challenges for many communities, EPA launched the Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach (referred to as Integrated Planning) in 2012. The concept behind Integrated Planning is to help communities establish CWA regulatory priorities and implementation schedules that are affordable for ratepayers. Developing Integrated Plans can be quite costly, however, which is why a bi-partisan group of Members have supported funding to help communities develop these plans. EPA has requested \$13 million to support this effort and we urge Congressional Appropriators to support this request.

By investing in clean water, Congress will ensure the economy continues to grow and jobs continue to be created. A 2014 study entitled the *National Economic and Labor Impacts of the Water Utility Sector* reports that over the next decade, the water and wastewater sector will contribute over \$500 billion to the national economy. According to the Outdoor Industry Association, Americans spend over \$120 billion annually on fishing and water sports activities, supporting over four million jobs as part of the outdoor recreational economy – spending that relies critically on the availability of clean water. The U.S. Department of Commerce estimates that each job created in the local water and wastewater industry creates 3.68 jobs in the national economy and each public dollar invested yields \$2.62 dollars in economic output in other industries.

It is clear that federal investment in clean water returns significant benefits to our economy and we urge you to support these important clean water programs.

Sincerely,