

Letter to the Editor Templates

**Length: ~150-250 words**

* Each publication sets its own limit and the trend is toward shorter pieces
* The first example has more than 250 words; information should be localized and edited to make the most compelling arguments in 250 words or less.

**Please send us a copy of what you submit & let us know if & when the publication runs your letter.**

**Example 1: React to an editorial or story on water, health, jobs and the economy, the environment, infrastructure or budget issues.**

To the Editor:

The [editorial/story] in the [date] [newspaper name] [“headline”] on [topic] failed to mention the much less visible but vital element of local infrastructure – our clean water and wastewater infrastructure. To safeguard public health, maintain our quality of life and economic growth and protect the environment in the coming years, much of our area’s water and sewer pipes and treatment systems must be replaced and expanded [tailor to local needs; consider including info about no water=no business and the utility being a major local economic driver and employer].

It’s easy to take water for granted. Our community enjoys the luxury of having 24/7 access to clean drinking water and reliable wastewater services. To meet the community’s future needs for reliable water supplies and wastewater treatment, we have determined that in the next \_\_\_ years nearly [percentage] of our [number] miles of pipes must be replaced and the [name] plant will require significant upgrades or replacement. Despite our best efforts, maintenance backlogs have become inevitable due to competing priorities and limited resources [insert specifics about the costs of regulatory compliance, the fact that local governments bear almost all the financial burden, affordability challenges for rate increases, lack of pubic/political support, etc.].

This situation is not unique to our community. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s 2008 *Clean Watershed Needs Survey* and the 2009 *Drinking Water Needs Survey* identified a total water infrastructure capital investment need of $632.9 billion over the next 20 years; at current funding levels, there will be a capital funding gap of at least $224 billion nationwide unless investment increases. [insert state and/or local infrastructure needs estimates]

Providing these essential services does not happen automatically. They require a commitment and investments. Congress must understand that local governments can no longer afford to go it alone – and that the federal partnership must be renewed by ensuring our communities have the funding and resources they need to meet today’s clean water challenges. [insert examples on how - e.g., fully funding State Revolving Fund, full tax-exemption for municipal bonds, integrated planning, smarter cost/benefit regulation].

[Name]

[Organization]

**Example 2: A news story about a water issue elsewhere in the country can be an opportunity to talk about local needs.**

To the Editor:

The brief item in yesterday’s newspaper about a major infrastructure failure [water pipe rupture, wastewater pipe collapse, etc.] in downtown [city] that [disrupted traffic and businesses, etc.] illustrates a looming problem facing our community and many others across the country.

Water and wastewater infrastructure systems across the nation are aging and deteriorating. The vast majority of the hundreds of thousands of miles of water and sewer pipes in this country were installed before World War II and are at or nearing replacement age.

[City name]’s water and wastewater systems are no exception. We have the following priorities in our area: [list].

Abundant, clean and safe water is essential to our public health, economy and environment. Too often we take for granted this resource and the “invisible” systems that bring it to us.

We cannot afford to ignore the challenges ahead. Congress must understand that local governments can no longer afford to go it alone – and that the federal partnership must be renewed by ensuring our communities have the funding and resources they need to meet today’s clean water challenges. [insert examples on how - e.g., fully funding SRF, full tax-exemption for municipal bonds, integrated planning, smarter cost/benefit regulation].

[Name]

[Organization]