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Western Lake Superior Sanitary District

July 9, 2015

The Honorable Al Franken
United States Senate
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Franken,

I am writing to express my deep concern with provisions inserted in the Senate's proposed Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill that, if enacted, would have costly consequences for the people in many communities struggling to eliminate sewage discharges to and delay improvements to water quality in the Great Lakes. I urge you to oppose these provisions.

Most alarming is the fact that these costly provisions are included in a **spending package that proposes to cut funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) by nearly 30%**. Imposing additional regulations on wastewater utilities at the same time as Congress proposes to cut infrastructure financing programs that assist with compliance will place an insurmountable burden on ratepayers.

Just two weeks ago, WLSSD and the City of Duluth announced the termination of a Consent Decree requiring the region to eliminate wet-weather related sanitary sewer overflows to Lake Superior and the St. Louis River. We accomplished this task a full two years before the required deadline of 2016. Over the past 13 years, WLSSD and Duluth have spent a combined \$140 million to eliminate sewer overflows at 18 locations identified as chronic overflow points. The infrastructure investments required to remedy the historic overflow problems would not have been possible without low-interest loans made possible through the CWSRF and significant local investment.

Although the historic overflow problems within WLSSD's and the City of Duluth's systems have been resolved, investment into the region's infrastructure must continue to prevent future overflows from occurring and to ensure the reliability and integrity of the sanitary sewer system for regional commerce, development, health and quality of life. The proposed steep cuts to the CWSRF will have severe impacts on funding available for infrastructure investments into the future.

WLSSD, a regional wastewater authority providing services to 17 communities and 4 major industrial facilities in northeastern Minnesota, is a nationally-recognized leader in pollution prevention—pioneering efforts to reduce pollutant discharges into the Great Lakes. We remain committed to protecting and improving the waters of the St. Louis River and Lake Superior. I urge you to strip Section 428 from the FY16 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations package and to fund the CWSRF at the full funding level of \$1.45 billion so the good work of WLSSD and many other wastewater agencies across Great Lakes states can continue.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter and please contact me at 218-740-4805 for more information.

Sincerely,

Marianne Bohren
Executive Director