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## North Shore Water Reclamation District



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August 4, 2015

The Honorable Mark Kirk  
United States Senate  
524 Hart Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: (S. 1645) as Section 428

Dear Senator Kirk:

I am writing to you regarding the North Shore Water Reclamation District's (NSWRD) concerns related to provisions included as Section 428 in the Senate's FY16 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriation Bill, which would amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act. The District believes this initiative would prohibit the use of blending as a wet weather tool by dischargers to the Great Lakes.

As a legislator representing the NSWRD communities for more than 15 years, you are aware that the NSWRD's most important mission is to protect the environment and prevent untreated wastewater from entering Lake Michigan and other Illinois watersheds. While we agree that bypassing untreated wastewater to the Great Lakes is unacceptable, we ask for the opportunity to discuss with you the implications of the bill's provisions as introduced. If enacted into law, these obligations would have an enormous impact on the cost of providing wastewater treatment services to residents in northeastern Illinois. The elimination of this essential wet weather tool could cost District Taxpayers well over \$76 million for unnecessary infrastructure improvements.

This legislation could make illegal the diversion of extraordinary wet weather flows from fully operating wastewater treatment facilities to existing permitted excess flow facilities. All Illinois excess flow facilities are legally permitted by the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency and are required to treat and disinfect wastewater prior to discharge. The treated discharge meets permitted effluent standards and protects the public health and the environment. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency not only supported and authorized these excess flow treatment facilities, but also provided federal grant funding to construct them. These facilities provide Illinois wastewater treatment agencies with the needed tools to provide continuous, safe, and reliable wastewater service during extreme weather events.

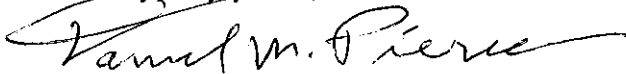
Permitted excess flow treatment facilities offer two unique benefits which protect the environment and the Great Lakes. First, they provide immediate unlimited volumetric capacity for treatment of wet weather flows which storage alone cannot provide. Second, they protect the wastewater treatment facilities' biological processes which would be severely impacted during wet weather events and for a substantial period of time following such an event.

The potential expenditure of millions of dollars that may be required by the provisions of this bill to construct infrastructure improvements that have minimal benefit to the environment comes at a time when the same taxpayers are being required to spend millions of dollars to reduce nutrient levels in accordance with new IEPA permit limits. Furthermore, the District, along with other municipalities and local government units, has committed to invest significant financial resources towards the formation of a regional watershed workgroup to identify water impairments utilizing a watershed based approach in which all pollutant sources, including non-point sources, are addressed to effectively improve the quality of the environment.

We would very much appreciate the opportunity to meet with you at your earliest convenience, possibly in your Chicago office, to discuss our deep concerns regarding the blending prohibition provisions of this bill.

Many thanks for consideration of this request.

Very truly yours,



Daniel M. Pierce

President

NORTH SHORE WATER RECLAMATION DISTRICT

C: The Honorable Richard Durbin  
The Honorable Robert Dold  
The Honorable Dan Lipinski  
The Honorable Mike Quigley  
Trustees - North Shore Water Reclamation District