



**American Water Works
Association**

Dedicated to the World's Most Important Resource™

September 23, 2015

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Appropriations Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chair
Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment and Related Agencies
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

Dear Sens. Cochran, Murkowski, Mikulski and Udall:

The American Water Works Association (AWWA) urges the committee to remove Section 428 from S.1645, a provision that would require Clean Water Act primacy agencies to re-write permits for publicly owned treatment works. By establishing a new and immediate standard for treatment of wet weather flows, and by setting a new and immediate deadline for combined sewer overflow abatement, this legislation will undo decades of federal, state, and local government planning, design, and construction. These provisions will throw into upheaval local water infrastructure investment strategies throughout the Great Lakes Basin.

AWWA's members are deeply committed to protecting our sources of drinking water, protecting the environment and addressing the infrastructure challenges to achieve those goals. To that end, communities across America are prioritizing investments that balance public health protection, levels of service and affordability of water service. This legislative directive, if retained, would upend the current financial balance endorsed by Congress, states, and the courts, and in doing so, have severe impacts on rate payers in the affected communities. The resulting impacts on wastewater rates would translate into less

September 23, 2015

opportunity to make other needed investments, including drinking water infrastructure; fewer resources for green infrastructure solutions; less capital to advance regionally significant investments; and reduced capacity for plant expansions to promote economic development. Each of these impacts will have secondary consequences for communities in and adjacent to affected water basins.

In some instances, setting a lofty goal is necessary to advance a cause. In this instance, the necessary work to protect water quality is under way. It must occur at a pace that communities can afford to bear, particularly when water service is already a challenge for many households. AWWA asks that the committee remove this section from S. 1645 and work with the committees of jurisdiction on water policy to advanced water infrastructure solutions which meet recognized needs and enjoy broad support.

Thank you for your attention to AWWA's concerns. If we can be of assistance in this or other matters please contact me or Tommy Holmes, AWWA Director of Legislative Affairs at (202) 326-6128 or tholmes@awwa.org.

Best regards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "G. Tracy Mehan, III". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, stylized "G" and "M".

G. Tracy Mehan, III
Executive Director for Government Affairs

cc: Senator Jim Inhofe, Chairman, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works
Senator Barbara Boxer, Ranking Member, Senate Committee on Environment & Public Works