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INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PAINTERS AND ALLIED TRADES, AFL-CIO

June 14, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chairman, House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
2134 Rayburn Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio:

On behalf of the International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT), I am writing to express our appreciation for your leadership and our support for the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021 (H.R. 1915). Additionally, we'd like to thank House Transportation and Infrastructure Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee Chairwoman Grace F. Napolitano (CA) and Ranking Member Brian Fitzpatrick (PA) for their bipartisan leadership. We applaud the collaborative, across the aisle nature of this legislation. We believe, and know that you agree, that investment in our crumbling wastewater infrastructure and addressing local water quality challenges should not be a partisan issue.

The unprecedented scope of infrastructure investment proposed by President Biden and being crafted in Congress is heartening and will provide the much-needed boost our economy needs.

Our nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure is vital to the protection, treatment, and distribution of clean water. However, age, strain from population growth, lack of investment, the pervasiveness of lead pipes, and emerging threats from climate change have increased the burden on the current water infrastructure system and the health risks to communities. The nation's wastewater and drinking water infrastructure received grades of "D+" and "C-" by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE), respectively. The good news is: investing in our water infrastructure is a win-win. BlueGreen Alliance research has found that by investing just 105 billion dollars over ten years, we could improve our drinking and clean water systems to a "B" grade and create 654,000 job-years across the U.S. economy.

Water infrastructure investments will boost our economy, create and sustain thousands of jobs while ensuring communities have safe water and water systems resilient to climate change. Repairing, rebuilding, and modernizing water infrastructure has the potential not only to improve public health, but to create high-quality jobs across the nation

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This means increased numbers of steelworkers, utility workers, painters, and other union workers to manufacture, maintain, and operate these systems.

H.R. 1915, The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act helps address our failing water infrastructure—and ensures quality jobs are created—by authorizing \$50 billion in investments to address our wastewater infrastructure and water quality needs. This includes \$40 billion for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (Clean Water SRF) program - more than quadrupling current levels. The Clean Water SRF has a proven track record of successfully providing funding to states and communities for wastewater infrastructure construction, and maintenance. Importantly, the bill will also create thousands of jobs because Davis Bacon and Buy America are applied to projects funded through the Clean Water SRF. An additional \$10 billion in grant assistance

Failing water infrastructure has severe public health impacts, and more than 27 million Americans get their water from systems that violate health standards. Low income communities and communities of color are disproportionately impacted by this contaminated water. Improperly managed water exposes communities to harmful chemicals such as lead, arsenic, and PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances). H.R. 3267, the Protect Drinking Water from PFAS Act of 2021 begins to address these health impacts by requiring the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to set an enforceable, nationwide primary drinking water standard for PFAS contaminants.

Our members are ready to get to work on projects and to be part of modernizing our nation's wastewater infrastructure. In addition, the increase to the amount of Federal assistance made available to States and communities through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) program for the first time in more than a generation means that access to clean, reliable, and safe water will not depend on where you live.

The robust funding levels in this bipartisan proposal are critical to addressing the \$270 billion backlog over the next 20 years according to the U.S. EPA in wastewater and stormwater upgrades identified by the states and our communities.

Thank you again for your leadership on this issue. The IUPAT looks forward to working with you and other members of Congress to ensure passage.

Sincerely,



Kenneth E. Rigmaiden
General President