



June 14, 2021

Chairman Peter DeFazio  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
2165 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,  
The National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Association (NOWRA) commends you and the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee for considering and approving H.R. 1915—the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021. This legislation will make great strides to address America’s water infrastructure needs and to help working-class families install, repair and replace malfunctioning decentralized wastewater treatment systems their households rely on.

NOWRA is the largest organization within the U.S. dedicated to educating and representing members within the onsite and decentralized wastewater industry. Our members include educators, regulators, engineers, contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, service providers, and other parties in the protection of North America’s water resources and environment.

In the U.S., public sewer systems do not extend to all communities. Without an available sewer line, families must rely on onsite individualized systems (typically a septic system) to treat wastewater. Roughly 25% of the country, or 85 million Americans, rely on such systems and over 30% of new single-family homes use an onsite system. Households are typically responsible for installing these systems, which can cost anywhere from a few thousand dollars to \$25,000 depending on the system and site conditions of the property. A failing onsite system can result in sewage overflow into people’s yards, and even their homes, causing serious public health and water quality concerns, along with degrading quality of life and exacerbating other socioeconomic problems. Replacing malfunctioning, antiquated septic systems and cesspools with modern, cleaner systems can provide cost-effective wastewater treatment that are protective of public health and the environment.

Language in H.R. 1915 is an important first step in addressing these challenges. The bill creates a new grant program under the Clean Water Act to provide funding to low- and moderate-income households through a qualified nonprofit or municipality. The bill is flexible in allowing solutions that best fit the needs of the household, geography, and community by allowing grants to be used for the construction, repair, or replacement of a decentralized wastewater system or the installation of a larger decentralized wastewater system that can provide treatment to two or more households. Further, households without access to functioning wastewater systems are prioritized for receiving funding under this bill.

NOWRA would like to express our strong support for H.R. 1915. We thank you for your leadership on this issue, as it directly impacts our members and their customers; as well as the environment. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to enact this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Thomas W. Groves". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "T" and a long, sweeping underline.

Thomas W. Groves,  
Executive Director