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COMMITTEE ON  
AGRICULTURE

COMMITTEE ON  
FINANCIAL SERVICES

Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-1013

The Honorable Peter DeFazio  
Chairman  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

As you begin to draft legislation to develop and improve our nation's infrastructure, I urge you and the Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to include investments and improvements in wastewater infrastructure and workforce development programs for African-American young men.

The U.S. is one of the wealthiest nations in the world. Despite this fact, there exists profound inequalities and disparities across our great nation. These discrepancies harm our most disenfranchised communities including our lower-income and African-American households. The next infrastructure package must prioritize these communities so that all Americans have equal access to economic prosperity and to modernized wastewater infrastructure in order to sustain healthy homes.

The United States received a "D+" for the overall condition and performance of American infrastructure from the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) in their recent 2017 Report Card. In the same report, the U.S. received a "D+" for its national wastewater infrastructure. Reports indicate there are approximately 540,000 households in the U.S. that lack complete plumbing—this is around 1.5 million individuals who lack modernized water infrastructure plans. Without adequate disposal systems for wastewater, families face environmental contamination and diseases such as hookworm. These adversities are worse for rural communities, lower-income communities and for individual with pre-existing conditions such as diabetes.

My state of Georgia also received a "D+" from the 2019 ASCE report card where 45% of local government water or wastewater treatment plants did not generate enough revenue to cover operational and maintenance costs. The report found that wastewater systems need to be maintained and expanded to ensure access to clean water and proper waste disposal. This is especially true since the Clean Water Act mandates water and sewage treatment plants must follow federal standards to keep water supply safe and sustainable. In fact, the Environmental Protection Agency estimates, over the next 20 years, \$271 billion in investments are needed to modernize or replace current wastewater infrastructure.

Additionally, as the inevitable construction facilitated by infrastructure legislation begins, it is critical the committee prioritize a diverse workforce. The infrastructure package must

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provide economic opportunity to disenfranchised populations such as African-American young men who have higher rates of unemployment. This is why I introduced H.R. 52 *The Jobs, On-the-Job 'Earn While You Learn' Training, and Apprenticeships for African-American Young Men Act* during the 115<sup>th</sup> Congress, and plan to do so again. This bill requires the Department of Labor to request labor unions, general contractors, and businesses that will rebuild infrastructure to actively recruit, hire, and provide on-the-job training to African-American men ages 18 to 39 through existing jobs, apprenticeships, and "earn while you learn" programs. Apprenticeships and career technical education have been fundamental strategies that provide individuals with the education and work-based learning they need for success in high-skill, high-demand infrastructure sectors and occupations. These programs must be offered to African-American young men to provide for their families the opportunity to obtain economic prosperity.

With infrastructure plans in development, I respectfully request that you include the following in any infrastructure legislation:

- Robust investment in our nation's wastewater infrastructure to keep American families safe from environmental contamination and diseases. These plans should include programs and funding requirements that help local and state level wastewater agencies modernize or replace current wastewater disposal systems.
- Include my legislation, *The Jobs, On-the-Job 'Earn While You Learn' Training, and Apprenticeships for African-American Young Men Act*, so that African-American families are provided employment and economic opportunities in the advancement of our nation's infrastructure.

We appreciate your consideration of these requests and look forward to working with you to ensure these items are included in the nation-wide infrastructure package.

Sincerely,



Congressman David Scott