



THE UNITED STATES
CONFERENCE OF MAYORS



March 17, 2021

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
2134 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
1610 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
271 Cannon House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair DeFazio, Subcommittee Chair Napolitano and Congressman Fitzpatrick,

On behalf of the nation's mayors, cities and counties, we thank you for introducing bipartisan legislation to address our nation's wastewater infrastructure needs. The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021 will help address the many water infrastructure challenges that communities across the country face.

In particular, we thank you for supporting the reauthorization of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, which provides capitalization grants to states who, in turn, make low interest loans to local communities and utilities for wastewater infrastructure projects. Moreover, by significantly increasing the authorization level and providing full appropriations for the CWSRF program, the federal government will ensure that more communities are able to access funding for projects to improve their wastewater infrastructure and meet their Clean Water Act requirements.

Additionally, the bill extends and increases authorization of the sewer overflow control grant program. This will enable communities to better manage their wet weather flows and invest in green infrastructure and water and energy efficiency projects.

Our organizations are strong supporters of the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF programs, which are essential tools for communities to provide clean and safe water for residents and businesses. Since local governments provide over 95 percent of the total funding for water infrastructure and the nation's growing water infrastructure needs, it is evident that our country must make substantial investments to repair and replace our nation's aging water infrastructure through the SRF programs, sewer overflow control grants and other programs. We urge Congress to fully fund these critical programs and to also encourage states to provide more SRF grants, negative interest loans and principal forgiveness to small, rural, and disadvantaged communities that are unable to meet their needs solely with loans.

As the coronavirus pandemic continues, local governments continue to face budget shortfalls and are struggling to support residents and businesses, provide services, keep essential workers employed and protect public health through vaccine administration. Moreover, local water and wastewater utilities are committed to ensuring all customers have access to clean and safe water to maintain public health. This,

however, has come at a cost to utilities, which are overwhelmingly funded by local ratepayers, and are now facing a significant drop in utility revenue essential to providing water service, continuing operations and making capital investments.

While the CWA programs in the legislation provide valuable assistance to local governments, we encourage the committee to also consider providing additional tools that offer communities flexibility. Local governments need to be able to partner with their state and the federal government to meet their wastewater and stormwater infrastructure needs in a manner that is also affordable to their citizens. We thank the committee for its efforts in passing bipartisan integrated planning legislation and would like to continue our work with you to provide additional flexibility and tools to communities who are facing substantial wastewater and stormwater burdens.

Thank you for your leadership on these issues and we look forward to working with you on long-term solutions. Local governments remain committed to meeting the growing water infrastructure needs in our communities. We urge the federal government to remain a committed partner in this important endeavor.

If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact our staff: Judy Sheahan (USCM) at jsheahan@usmayors.org; Carolyn Berndt (NLC) at berndt@nlc.org; or Adam Pugh (NACo) at apugh@naco.org.

Sincerely,



Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The U.S. Conference of Mayors



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities



Matthew D. Chase
CEO and Executive Director
National Association of Counties

cc: Members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee