

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Michael Simpson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Simpson and Ranking Member Pingree:

As you begin drafting the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully urge you to appropriate robust funding for critical water infrastructure programs.

The enactment of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) in the 117th Congress provided an historic increase to the federal programs that support our water infrastructure. While these funding increases are welcome, however, there remains a need to maintain our collective efforts to secure our clean drinking water supply. Even today, over two million Americans lack access to running water and more 200 million Americans receive water with detectable levels of PFAS, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances that have been correlated with a host of illnesses.

Investing in our water infrastructure not only protects the health of our communities, but also facilitates economic activity: the U.S. Water Alliance's 2017 report *The Value of Water* determined that robustly supporting water infrastructure would yield over \$220 billion in total annual economic activity, sustaining roughly 1.3 million jobs over the next 10 years by contributing to the health of our manufacturing sector and advanced industry nationwide. Moreover, maintaining clean water in rivers and streams is essential to our outdoor economy. According to the American Sportfishing Association, boating and fishing contributed \$50.4 billion in 2021, making those activities the largest economic driver in outdoor recreation.

To that end, in the FY24 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request that you provide:

- At least \$7.6 billion each for the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs);
- At least \$400 million for the Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant Program;
- At least \$225 million for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Pilot Program to ensure our most vulnerable citizens do not lose access to clean drinking water;
- At least \$369 million for environmental justice programs to enhance relationship building, awareness, and support to community leaders, and their local on-the-ground partners.
- At least \$80.4 million for activities carried out under the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA);
- At least \$40 million for the Connection to Publicly Owned Treatment Works program;

- At least \$17.7 million for Water Infrastructure Workforce Development;
- Report language supporting for federal agency programs including the Urban Waters Federal Partnership Program, that have been created to cut through red tape to make sure communities are getting the resources they need quickly and efficiently to achieve the greatest impact.
 - *Urban Waters Federal Partnership —The Committee recognizes the importance of the Urban Waters Federal Partnership to revitalize urban waters and the communities that surround them, transforming overlooked assets into treasured centerpieces and economic drivers of urban revival. The Committee encourages EPA to establish a Steering Committee, and a non-governmental steering group to include academia as described in the Framework for the Future. The purpose of Steering Committee and NGO steering group is to establish a goal of doubling the number of UWFP locations within the next decade and establish equitable climate resilience pilot projects. The Committee requests EPA submit a report summarizing the progress of activities within one year of the enactment of this Act.*
- Report language adding flexibility in these programs to advance green stormwater infrastructure and enable interjurisdictional coordination and collaboration between local, state, and federal agencies.
 - *Green Project Reserve Guidance for Determining Eligibility – The Committee values the Green Projects Reserve under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) in funding green projects in one of four categories: green infrastructure, water efficiency, energy efficiency, or other environmentally innovative activities. The Committee supports EPA increasing the Green Project Reserve percentage within the CWSRF program to 20 percent. The Committee encourages EPA to continue using adaptive practices that takes advantage of our natural landscape will further our ability to capture, filter, and treat pollution at the source.*

By supporting these programs, we can further our efforts to support job creation, protect our water resources, and help every community get the access to clean water they need. Thank you for consideration and your attention to these programs.

Respectfully,



Emilia Strong Sykes
Member of Congress



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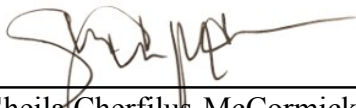
Eleanor Holmes Norton
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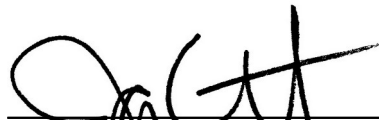
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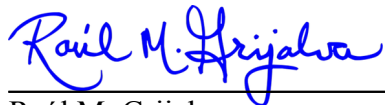
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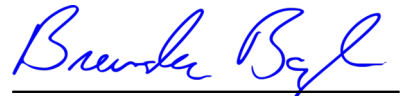
Barbara Lee
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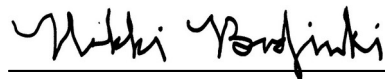
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