DATE

The Honorable

U.S. Senate

Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator - :

I am writing to request your cosponsorship of S. 692, the *Water Infrastructure Flexibility Act (WIFA),* legislation which was unanimously reported by the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee on April 5th, and which garnered support from 95 Senators as part of the Senate reauthorization package for the Water Resources Development Act during the 114th Congress. S. 692 is sponsored by Senators Deb Fischer, Senator Sherrod Brown and Senator Ben Cardin, along with Senators John Boozman, Roy Blunt, Rob Portman and Cory Booker.

The WIFA proposal establishes additional tools to the Clean Water Act (CWA) to help municipalities more affordably comply with the statute. Nationally, municipalities face nearly a $300 billion investment challenge in clean water infrastructure needs over the next twenty years and an additional $300 billion in drinking water infrastructure needs. As communities face this investment challenge, they are increasingly under pressure to provide clean and safe water services at an affordable cost to our ratepayers. According to a 2013 national survey of wastewater treatment operators, clean water rates are expected to increase at double the rate of inflation or more over the next decade, with rates in many urban areas two to three times the national average - and these rates do not reflect rates charged for drinking water services. ***[Here in XXX rates are expected to increase by %%% over ## years.]*** Much of the pressure on rates is being driven by a variety of factors including repairing and replacing old pipes and treatment systems, meeting more stringent federal standards, and managing wet weather-related challenges in the face of a changing precipitation patterns.

The WIFA proposal codifies Integrated Planning, an initiative launched by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as an alternative compliance approach to address municipal wastewater and stormwater management needs under the CWA. Integrated Planning (IP) has proven an effective tool enabling municipalities to prioritize CWA compliance obligations without sacrificing overall water quality, which enables them to more affordably finance required investments. **[LOCALIZE: Here in ABC, we are *considering using this option in order to address XYZ*]**

The legislation also provides municipalities flexibility to consider alternative approaches, such as green infrastructure, to meet water quality standards. Finally, the legislation requires EPA to update its Financial Capability Assessment Guidance so that the agency moves away from a one-size-fits-all national affordability standard to one tailored for individual community needs.

The WIFA is important for our State’s communities and we urge you to cosponsor it. Thank you for your consideration of this request and please feel free to contact me at ####.

Sincerely,