



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

March 29, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David P. Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce,

We write in support of \$1 million for the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program in the FY 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Congress created this competitive grant program for water workforce training at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in S. 3021, America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. The program is authorized at \$1 million for 2020 for water workforce training to serve both new and incumbent utility workers.

Across the water industry, from rural areas and small towns to cities, employers are struggling to find qualified workers to protect and manage our nation's water resources. The Water Research Foundation projects that in the next five to 10 years, roughly one-third of all current water and wastewater utility workers will retire, far exceeding workforce replacement needs in other sectors. In some regions, over half of the water utility workforce is eligible to retire in the next decade. We must act now to ensure the pipeline of well-qualified workers does not run dry.

This grant program will help utilities provide training that will open the door to the middle class for thousands of American workers, who are desperately needed to build and maintain our water infrastructure across America. As the baby boomers head into retirement, it is essential that we train the next generation of qualified workers who will be responsible for the safety of our water supply and the sustainability of our infrastructure.

Updating and investing in American infrastructure is a priority. Every year, there are more than 230,000 water main breaks across the United States. Skilled utility workers are critical to the delivery of 24/7, essential utility services. Training needs vary across the range of jobs in the




water utility sector. Many jobs require a high school diploma or less, but they do require more extensive on-the-job training and familiarity with a variety of tools and technologies.

We can address a critical infrastructure and public health need by investing in our water infrastructure, training thousands of Americans for good-paying jobs, and ensuring that we have safe and reliable water for cities, towns and farms across America.

Thank you for considering our request to support \$1 million for the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Program in the FY 2020 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress


Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress