

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 22, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
131 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
125 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As the Subcommittee develops spending priorities for Fiscal Year 2020 (FY20), we thank you for your commitment to the Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation (WIIN) Act (P.L. 114-322) grant programs. We strongly urge you to support full and robust funding for the Assistance for Small and Disadvantaged Communities grants in Section 2104 at the full authorized amount of \$60 million, the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water grants in Section 2105 at \$60 million, and the Lead Testing in School and Child Care Program drinking water grants in Section 2107 at the FY19 enacted level of \$25 million. We urge additional support for the America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) (P.L. 115-270) grant programs and request full and robust funding for the Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability grants in Section 2005 at the full authorized amount of \$4 million and the Sewer Overflow Control grants in Section 4106 at \$225 million.

Our constituents have a right to expect that water coming from their taps is safe to drink. We can no longer delay needed upgrades to our infrastructure, strengthening drinking water protections, removing lead and other contaminants out of public water supplies, and implementing control measures. Sewer overflows and stormwater management are addressed by EPA and the States through the Clean Water Act; however, implementation of control measures and compliance can be very costly. In addition, many communities across the country are turning to water recycling as a way of addressing concerns about the availability of safe and reliable sources of potable and non-potable water in the future, including the capture, treatment, and reuse of stormwater flows.

Small and disadvantaged communities face particular difficulties removing contaminants from their drinking water systems due to funding constraints. In 2018, there were more than 10,000 health-based violations of the Safe Drinking Water Act by public water systems with many times more monitoring and reporting violations, and small and very small public water systems comprise 95-percent of all public water systems. Fortunately, the Section 2104 grants were created to allow communities with the fewest resources to ensure their drinking water is safe.

There are nearly 2,000 water systems—at least one in every state in the country—that have elevated levels of lead in their drinking water. The Section 2105 grants go directly toward replacement of lead service lines, testing, planning, and corrosion control in water systems throughout the country. Further, there have been numerous reports in recent years of lead contamination found in the drinking water at schools across the country. Testing can be prohibitively expensive for already cash-strapped schools. Section 2107 grants were created to help defray those costs and keep the limited resources our schools receive focused on education.

The America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 continued bipartisan support of clean water. Section 2005 directs the EPA to establish a Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program to award grants to help increase the resilience or adaptability of drinking water systems to regional changes in hydrologic conditions including droughts, flooding, and sea level rise.

Finally, in recognizing the challenges facing too many communities across our nation, in the America's Water Infrastructure Act, Congress authorized \$225 million in grants annually to support cost-sharing state and direct municipal grants for the planning, construction, design and management of treatment works for combined sewer and sanitary sewer overflows or stormwater management in Section 4106. By providing an additional source of federal grant funding for States and municipalities, Congress was responding both to the need to help invest in our nation's crumbling water-related infrastructure, as well as respond to the calls from communities to make such investments more affordable. Fully funding the Section 4106 grant program in Fiscal Year 2020 is a necessary step towards protecting our communities from water pollution.

These grant programs passed the Senate with overwhelming bipartisan support, in large part because we in the Senate know that clean water is one of the most basic foundations of our daily lives and that we ignore its safe storage and delivery at our own peril. The underfunding of our vital water and wastewater infrastructure, and the safety of our families and children are issues we simply cannot continue to ignore. Pipes may be out of sight, but they cannot be out of mind. We urgently need to minimize the risks to our communities and our children. Urban, rural, and suburban neighborhoods in every community in the United States all rely on safe, clean water.

We respectfully urge you to continue to increase investments in these important grants and fully fund these programs that protect our communities.

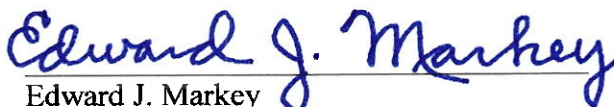
Sincerely,



Benjamin L. Cardin
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



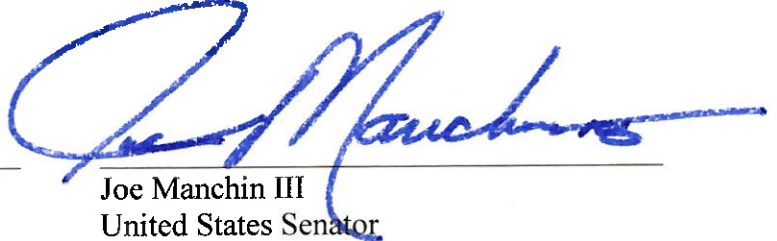
Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



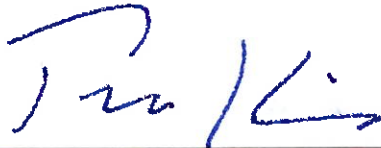
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



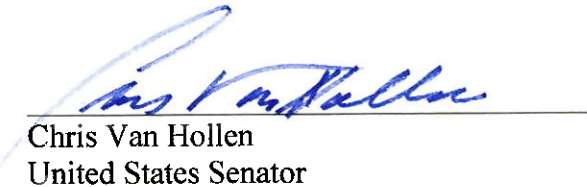
Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Joe Manchin III
United States Senator



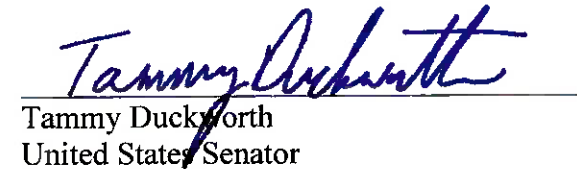
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



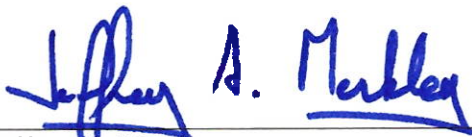
Chris Van Hollen
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Margaret Wood Hassan
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Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Robert Menendez
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Sherrod Brown
United States Senator



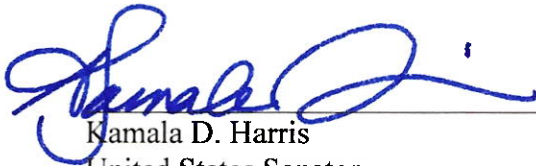
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United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Kyrsten Sinema
United States Senator



Tammy Baldwin
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