



October 27, 2022

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Vice Chairman  
Senate Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

The Honorable Kay Granger  
Ranking Member  
House Appropriations Committee  
Washington, D.C.

Dear Chairman Leahy, Vice Chairman Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

On behalf of the hundreds of public drinking water and clean water utilities the Association of Metropolitan Agencies (AMWA) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) represent throughout the U.S., we strongly urge Congress to provide the highest levels of federal investment for water infrastructure programs in the Fiscal Year 2023 (FY23) Omnibus Appropriations package, in particular for the Clean and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) and low-income water customer assistance.

AMWA and NACWA greatly appreciate Congress' support for the investments provided under the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA) (Public Law No: 117-58) to enhance the federal government's partnership with states and local communities in funding essential water infrastructure. These investments advance public health and environmental protection. While the IIJA provided direct appropriations to begin bridging the funding gap disparity whereby 95 percent of wastewater and drinking water infrastructure investment comes from local ratepayers and states, the legislation further authorized \$2.75 billion in regular FY23 appropriations for each of the SRFs.

Low-cost financing provided through the SRFs are the primary federal tool that public utilities have utilized to help finance critical local water infrastructure, meet increasing Clean Water Act (CWA) and Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) regulatory obligations, and further improve water quality.

The SRFs will be an even more crucial investment tool for local communities in the years ahead as public water utilities address increasingly complex challenges related to managing aging infrastructure, expanding compliance obligations, addressing PFAS and emerging contaminants, and ensuring system resilience in the face of climate change, all while working to keep rates affordable - especially for low-income and disadvantaged communities.

It is especially important that the highest level of FY23 appropriations for the overall SRFs be provided if Congress continues using the SRFs, rather than separate State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) funding, to fund Congressionally Directed Spending/Community Project Funding. AMWA and NACWA support Congress' use of these appropriations "earmarks" to help individual water systems undertake important local water infrastructure projects, but want to ensure that any funding for earmarks does not hinder access to SRF financing by all eligible communities and the long-term viability of the program. These direct spending programs benefit communities all across the country in red states and blue states alike, and it is therefore imperative that Congress fund the SRFs at the highest levels possible.

The IIJA separately authorized the creation of the Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program at EPA, which was long championed by AMWA and NACWA to assist households struggling to pay their water and sewer bills.

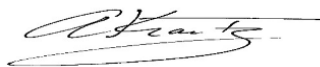
Emergency low-income water customer assistance funding was provided through the Department of Health and Human Services for the first time during the COVID-19 pandemic in the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2021 (Public Law No: 116-260) and the American Rescue Plan Act (Public Law No: 117-2), but this money will dry up in 2023 and more funding will be needed to address this issue long-term. Providing dedicated FY23 appropriations for EPA to begin getting the Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program up and running is critical to ensuring no gap exists in helping struggling Americans afford their essential water services until Congress can decide how to structure and fund a permanent low-income water assistance program.

IIJA further authorized \$3 million for a low-income water community assistance needs assessment, which was included in the Senate's FY23 bill. FY23 appropriations for EPA to conduct this assessment would serve as critical data moving forward for a permanent program and where to best direct low-income resources.

Congressional FY23 support for the SRFs and low-income assistance is vital to helping public utilities be able to continue providing the highest level of affordable, reliable, and sustainable water services for their local communities.

AMWA and NACWA thank you for your continued leadership and work on behalf of the public wastewater and drinking water utility sector. As the committees' work continues on the FY23 Omnibus Appropriations package, we kindly ask for your continued consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Adam Krantz  
CEO  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies



Tom Dobbins  
CEO  
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies