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January 21, 2022

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
Senate Majority Leader  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi  
Speaker of the House  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Schumer and Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the approximately 350 public wastewater and stormwater agencies the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) represents across the country, we want to thank you for your strong leadership and hard work to ensure clean water was an integral part of the recently passed *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act* (IIJA) and continues to remain a part of ongoing discussions to advance the Build Back Better (BBB) framework.

The direct spending provided for under the IIJA will have major positive impacts on countless communities seeking to update their aging clean water infrastructure and better ensure that water and sewer costs are not overburdening their residents, particularly low-income households. The IIJA funding for clean water is a crucial first step in bridging the water infrastructure funding gap.

Under the IIJA however, some significant clean water needs were only authorized and not directly funded. Specifically, these include funding for EPA grants to help communities improve the resiliency of their sewer and stormwater infrastructure, reduce sewer overflows that pose a challenge to water quality, and provide low-income assistance for households unable to afford their water and sewer bills. NACWA requests that these issues be addressed as BBB discussions continue and remain part of the framework for the legislation.

The BBB presents a critical opportunity to fund these remaining priorities to ensure communities have the necessary additional resources to combat climate change and assist families in need while continuing to provide clean, safe, reliable, and affordable water.

Ninety-five percent of current annual investment nationwide in water system infrastructure comes from state and local governments. This low federal cost-share has contributed to steadily rising rates in communities of all sizes and places a heavy burden on low-income families. While the IIJA goes a long way to addressing these needs, more must be done to assist low-income households. That is why NACWA strongly supports funding and expansion of the U.S. EPA low-income water customer assistance program, which was authorized but not appropriated for in the IIJA.

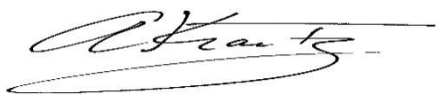
The House-passed BBB would provide \$225 million for an expanded, permanent low-income water assistance program that will help millions of families more affordably access essential public clean water and drinking water services, while also helping local communities make the investments needed to continue maintaining and adapting their infrastructure to ensure water resilience. It is critical that these funds stay part of any final BBB package.

Additionally, climate stress is water stress. Whether drought, flooding, or rising sea levels, when Americans think of the effects of climate change, they are thinking of the stresses on our nation's water infrastructure and the efforts communities take to mitigate against these growing threats.

To help address this, the House-passed BBB would provide \$1.85 billion in direct grants—not loans—for upgrading sanitary sewer and storm sewer systems to reduce overflows and runoff. These are critical infrastructure systems that protect homes and water quality and that are being directly impacted by changing climate trends. This additional federal investment in water systems will build resiliency, protect communities and save lives, and NACWA requests that it is included in a final BBB bill.

NACWA looks forward to working with you to ensure clean water is an important component of the BBB package. If you need any additional information or support, please do not hesitate to contact Kristina Surfus, NACWA's Managing Director of Government Affairs, at 202.833.4655 or [ksurfus@nacwa.org](mailto:ksurfus@nacwa.org).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Krantz', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Adam Krantz