

Alabama Rivers Alliance ♦ American Bottom Conservancy ♦ American Public Works Association ♦ American Rivers ♦ American Water Works Association ♦ Arkansas Wildlife Federation ♦ Association for Beaver Lake Environment ♦ Association of California Water Agencies ♦ Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies ♦ Clean Water Action ♦ Clean Water Network ♦ Conservation Law Foundation ♦ Delaware Nature Society ♦ Endangered Habitats League ♦ Florida Federation of Garden Clubs ♦ Food & Water Watch ♦ Georgia River Network ♦ Help Save the Apalachicola River Group ♦ Huron River Watershed Council ♦ Missouri Coalition for the Environment ♦ National Association of Clean Water Agencies ♦ National Association of Flood & Stormwater Management Agencies ♦ National Wildlife Federation ♦ Ohio Environmental Council ♦ Passaic River Coalition ♦ Potomac River Association ♦ Prairie Rivers Network ♦ River Network ♦ The River Project ♦ Rural Community Assistance Partnership ♦ Sierra Club ♦ Spokane Riverkeeper ♦ Upper Chattahoochee Riverkeeper ♦ Water Environment Federation ♦ Waterkeeper Alliance ♦ Western Lake Erie Waterkeeper Association ♦ Wilderness East ♦ Yell County Wildlife Federation

June 22, 2010

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our organizations and the millions of members they represent, we urge you to support community water infrastructure adaptation as an essential component of comprehensive climate and energy legislation. Direct funding to states and municipalities is urgently needed to help upgrade and adapt critical water infrastructure to a more volatile and uncertain climate.

While the nation works to reduce carbon pollution and avoid catastrophic warming, adaptation is the only option for reducing our vulnerability to climate change in the near term. The Senate must lead the way by providing adaptation funding to states and cities in the *American Power Act* or other climate and energy legislation it takes up in the coming months. The current lack of community water infrastructure adaptation in the *American Power Act* threatens to greatly increase the costs and consequences of climate change across the country.

Communities are on the front lines when it comes to climate change. Rising temperatures will cause more frequent and extreme storms and droughts, declining snowpack, more intense heat waves, and a number of other impacts. Communities will increasingly be faced with too much water or too little. Droughts will force water restrictions, slow local economies, damage ecosystems, and threaten our quality of life. Increased frequency and intensity of storms will put more people, homes, and businesses at risk from flooding in both coastal and riverine areas.

Communities face a daunting challenge in repairing aging water infrastructure systems and adapting them to a more volatile climate with limited resources. But ignoring the problem is not an option. Land use and infrastructure decisions being made now will have to withstand a changing climate for decades to come. We must begin building more resilient cities and towns by upgrading and retrofitting infrastructure, relocating our most vulnerable assets away from high risk areas, and protecting and restoring the forests, wetlands, and floodplains that slow flood waters and recharge water supplies during times of drought. The federal government can play a critical role in this effort

by providing information and financial assistance to state and local governments and incentivizing adaptation planning.

Unfortunately, while past climate legislation has recognized this urgent need, the *American Power Act* leaves communities high and dry. *The Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act* (S. 1733) includes funding for states and communities to adapt their water supply, wastewater, flood control, and coastal infrastructure systems. *The Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Adaptation Act of 2009* (S. 1712) similarly includes a program to help water utilities adapt. While the *American Power Act* includes critical natural resources adaptation provisions, there is also an urgent need for more targeted assistance to state and local governments to help reduce their vulnerability to a more volatile climate.

In the coming years, adaptation is an essential strategy for avoiding the worst impacts of a changing climate, protecting communities, and ensuring a safe and consistent supply of water. Any comprehensive climate and energy legislation is incomplete if it fails to help states and cities adapt critical infrastructure systems to the rising tide of floods, droughts, and other challenges we're beginning to witness. We urge you to include community water infrastructure adaptation in any climate and energy legislation that you consider in coming months.

Sincerely,

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