



September 20, 2011

The Honorable Pat Toomey  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Toomey:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing thousands of drinking water systems across the country, we would like to express our support for S. 1578, the "End Unnecessary Costs Caused by Report Mailing Act of 2011." We believe this legislation will allow the nation's drinking water utilities to save money and increase efficiency by utilizing modern communications technology when sharing annual water quality reports with their customers.

The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 (SDWA) require public drinking water systems to "mail" water quality reports to all customers on an annual basis. Fifteen years after enactment of this law, our members report spending hundreds of thousands of dollars per year to distribute these reports through the mail, even though electronic communication options have become prevalent. The money spent printing and mailing these reports could instead be invested in infrastructure upgrades that improve water quality and create jobs.

We are glad to see that S. 1578 updates the SDWA to allow drinking water utilities to distribute water quality reports over the Internet, while also ensuring that the public maintains robust access to water quality information. We strongly support the public's right to know about the quality of their drinking water and agree that utilities should continue to be required to mail reports announcing violations of federal water quality standards to their customers. We also support allowing customers to request a paper copy of a water quality report by mail.

S. 1578 represents a sensible update to SDWA that will save drinking water systems money while maintaining the public's ability to access important water quality information. The Obama Administration will consider allowing electronic communication of water quality reports through EPA's "Retrospective Review of Existing Regulations." Your legislation will allow this change to happen in a timely manner. Thank you for introducing this legislation, we look forward to working with you toward its passage.

Sincerely,

American Water Works Association  
Association of California Water Agencies  
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies  
National Association of Water Companies  
National Rural Water Association

cc: The Honorable Barbara Boxer, Chairman, Committee on Environment and Public Works  
The Honorable James Inhofe, Ranking Member, Committee on Environment and Public Works  
The Honorable Ben Cardin, Chairman, Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife  
The Honorable Jeff Sessions, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Water and Wildlife