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## **AMWA Praises Water Utility Adaptation Language in Climate Bill** *“Adaptation Partnerships” Offer Local Grants to Adapt to Climate Change*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today praised Senators Barbara Boxer and John Kerry for including within their “Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act” a program that would offer competitive grant funds to help water systems prepare for the impacts of climate change. The Boxer-Kerry bill is expected to be the main climate change legislation considered by the Senate this year.

“Global climate change is expected to lead to a host of challenges for American water systems, ranging from severe drought and melting snowpack that stresses water supplies to increased heavy precipitation events and rising sea levels that threaten water quality,” said AMWA Executive Director Diane VanDe Hei. “The inclusion of the “Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships” program within the ‘Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act’ will help local water systems adapt their operations to these challenges.”

Earlier this year, AMWA worked with California Congresswoman Lois Capps and other drinking water and wastewater organizations to develop the “Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act,” which Rep. Capps introduced in the House as H.R. 2969. Under that bill, each year utilities would compete for matching funds to finance change adaptation projects that would help them address their most significant climate-related risks. Last week, Nevada Senator Harry Reid included a similar program when he introduced S. 1712, the “Water Efficiency, Conservation, and Adaptation Act.” Sen. Boxer and Maryland Senator Ben Cardin are each cosponsors of S. 1712. The “Water System Mitigation and Partnerships” program within the Boxer-Kerry bill closely mirrors these earlier proposals.

“Utilities will use funding obtained through the adaptation partnerships program to undertake water conservation and efficiency efforts, finance water reuse and recycling projects to develop new water supplies or improve water quality, and conduct regionally-specific evaluations on how climate change will impact their operations,” said VanDe Hei. “The legislation also requires that these projects have a clear nexus with climate change. Utilities applying for funding will be required to cite available research describing a climate change-related risk, explain how the project would address that risk, and demonstrate that the project is consistent with state-level climate change adaptation plans.”

VanDe Hei concluded, “AMWA thanks Senators Boxer, Kerry, Reid, and Cardin, and Congresswoman Capps, for their efforts to advance the “Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships” program. We look forward to continuing this important work on behalf of water utility climate adaptation in the months ahead.”

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*The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies is an organization of the largest publicly owned drinking water suppliers in the United States.*

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