



**\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\***  
**April 30, 2009**

**Contact: Dan Hartnett**  
**202-331-2820**

## **AMWA Highlights Deficiencies in Federal Infrastructure Policy** *Current Programs Shortchange Urban Drinking Water Systems*

**Washington, D.C.** – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today urged members of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to improve access to federal water infrastructure assistance for urban drinking water systems. The Environment and Public Works Committee is expected to begin consideration of legislation to reauthorize the DWSRF next week, but draft versions of the bill would not address some of the most critical deficiencies of the program.

“The [DWSRF] has been woefully under-funded since its inception in 1996, overlooking the needs of metropolitan systems and failing to recognize the potential for job creation in urban areas,” said AMWA Executive Director Diane VanDe Hei in an April 30 letter to Environment and Public Works Committee Chairman Barbara Boxer and Ranking Member James Inhofe. “In addition, many state programs offer uncompetitive interest rates and have in place policies preventing or dissuading our members from applying for loans, and the administrative burdens imposed on loan recipients undercut the program’s value. The effect of these deficiencies is that many urban water systems do not have access to federal funds to repair, rehabilitate, or replace their aging infrastructure.” A copy of the letter is attached.

The 2007 Drinking Water Needs Survey recently released by EPA found that more than thirty-five percent of the total state drinking water infrastructure need over the next twenty years comes from water systems serving more than 100,000 people. However, since the inception of the DWSRF in 1996, only twenty-three percent of the program’s loans have gone to these urban water systems. Furthermore, thirteen states have never awarded DWSRF funds to a utility serving more than 100,000 people, and nine additional states have allocated less than ten percent of their total DWSRF dollars to urban systems.

“Even stimulus funds are not reaching urban water systems,” added VanDe Hei. “AMWA members tell us that despite the job creation opportunities associated with their urban infrastructure projects, most state SRF programs are only funding small projects.”

To document the problems our members have experienced with the DWSRF program, AMWA plans to undertake a study in the coming weeks that will offer guidance on how Congress can develop programs and policies to address urban water infrastructure needs.

“Currently, there is not a federal program dedicated to helping urban communities upgrade their drinking water infrastructure,” VanDe Hei said. “Given the well-documented challenges facing the nation’s infrastructure, AMWA believes that an improved SRF program – or a new federal water infrastructure program targeted at urban areas – would go a long way toward achieving results in the years and decades ahead.”

\*

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

###