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Contact: Dan Hartnett
202-331-2820

AMWA Applauds Call For Drinking Water Infrastructure Funding in Stimulus Legislation

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today urged members of the House of Representatives to join Texas Congressman Gene Green in calling for a significant investment in drinking water infrastructure as part of economic stimulus legislation that Congress is expected to debate early next year. Rep. Green is circulating a letter to House Appropriations Committee Chairman David Obey requesting \$10 billion for drinking water infrastructure and asking that states reserve at least 30% of their drinking water stimulus funding for large metropolitan projects that will quickly create the most jobs. A copy of Rep. Green’s letter is attached.

“Over the past several months, AMWA has collected and documented numerous examples of ‘ready-to-go’ drinking water infrastructure projects from our member utilities,” said AMWA Executive Director Diane VanDe Hei. “But as we continued to collect information on more and more projects, it became clear that a significant increase in funding was warranted to create the most jobs and perform important upgrades to the nation’s drinking water infrastructure in metropolitan areas, where it is needed most.”

An earlier version of stimulus legislation approved by the House in September would have only set aside \$1 billion for drinking water infrastructure, while AMWA’s survey results indicate that there is at least \$3 billion worth of “ready-to-go” projects at the nation’s metropolitan drinking water systems serving more than 100,000 people. Other surveys covering drinking water systems of all sizes have identified about \$10 billion worth of “ready-to-go” projects next year.

“In addition to requesting an appropriate level of drinking water funding, Rep. Green is wisely recommending that states be required to set aside a portion of their drinking water stimulus monies for the largest projects that will put the most people to work and most quickly stabilize the economy,” said VanDe Hei. “Our member utilities have told us that the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund – the likely mechanism to distribute stimulus funds – often fails to make a meaningful contribution to water projects in urban centers. Rep. Green would address this problem by devoting 30% of a state’s drinking water stimulus funds for the largest projects, which should help cut red tape and put the money to work where it will most quickly make a difference.”

“We applaud Congressman Green for taking the lead on this important issue, and we hope many other House members will join him on this effort,” VanDe Hei continued. “We look forward to working with these members to use stimulus funds to enhance the nation’s drinking water infrastructure.”

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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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