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Contact: Dan Hartnett
202-331-2820

AMWA Praises New Water System Adaptation Legislation *Bill Offers Local Grants to Adapt to Climate Change*

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today applauded the introduction of the “Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act,” legislation sponsored by Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) that would authorize a new EPA program to offer competitive grant funds to help water systems prepare for the impacts of climate change on their operations. A bill number has not yet been assigned to the legislation.

“Just this week, a new report from the U.S. Global Change Research Program confirmed that climate change is already impacting the nation’s water cycle, and that further impacts are unavoidable in the decades ahead,” said AMWA Executive Director Diane VanDe Hei. “Even if the United States drastically reduces its future greenhouse gas emissions, the nation’s water systems will be faced with a series of water quality and quantity challenges brought on by severe drought, melting snowpack, increased heavy precipitation events, and rising sea levels. The ‘Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act’ takes an important first step toward providing the nation’s water systems with the tools they need to keep water flowing to communities that depend on them.”

Working with Congresswoman Capps and other drinking water and wastewater organizations, AMWA developed the Water System Adaptation Partnerships legislation. Under the proposal, each year EPA would solicit climate change adaptation projects from drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater systems, and award matching funds to proposals that will help utilities address the most significant climate-related risks and benefit the largest numbers of water users. When introduced on June 19, Rep. Capps was joined in support of the bill by six original cosponsors. A copy of the bill is attached.

“Funding obtained by utilities through the “Water System Adaptation Partnerships Act” could be used by utilities to undertake water conservation and efficiency efforts, fund capital projects to develop new water supplies or improve water quality, and utility-specific evaluations to estimate how climate change will impact their sustainability,” said VanDe Hei. “The bill 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, “This legislation represents a positive step, and AMWA encourages Congress to quickly pass it into law, either as stand-alone legislation or as an amendment to comprehensive climate change legislation. AMWA thanks Congresswoman Capps for her leadership on this issue and looks forward to working toward passage of this important bill.”

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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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