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## **AMWA Statement on the “Chemical and Water Security Act”** *Group Supports Improved Bill – Looks Forward to Senate Consideration*

*Statement of Diane Van De Hei, Executive Director, Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies:*

This week, the U.S. House of Representatives is expected to vote on H.R. 2868, the “Chemical and Water Security Act.” While the bill is not perfect, AMWA supports its passage because the legislation recognizes the importance of securing drinking water facilities while also protecting local water utility managers from federal interference in their choice of water disinfection chemicals.

AMWA has consistently opposed legislative proposals that would allow the federal government to broadly impose “inherently safer technology” mandates on local drinking water systems and force these utilities to adopt an unworkable disinfectant chemical or process that would not meet their water treatment needs. Instead, H.R. 2868 allows individual utilities to examine different disinfection methods and select their best option. Only state regulatory agencies will have the direct authority to review water and wastewater utility chemical choices – and must provide local utilities with a clear avenue to appeal the outcome of the state review with which they disagree.

H.R. 2868 also achieves several other objectives insisted upon by AMWA. The bill exempts drinking water and wastewater systems from the Department of Homeland Security’s CFATS regulations and maintains EPA’s role as the lead agency for water sector security. The bill preserves the existing maximum one-year jail term and \$100,000 fine for individuals found to have illegally disclosed protected information such as utility vulnerability assessments. The legislation does not require utilities to provide outside individuals with their own copies of this sensitive information – as previous versions of the bill would have done. Finally, the bill does not allow the federal government to shut down the operations of a drinking water or wastewater facility for non-compliance with security regulations – an action that would result in serious public health implications.

Despite these enhancements, AMWA looks forward to working with the U.S. Senate to further improve H.R. 2868. In particular, we remain concerned about provisions that give off-site union officials a significant role in the development of security procedures at water facilities. AMWA will also work with the Senate to carefully scrutinize the bill’s remaining “inherently safer technology” provisions to ensure that opportunities for government interference in local water disinfection decisions are minimized.

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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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