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AMWA Pledges to Push for Water Adaptation Program in Climate Bill *Amendment Dropped in Committee Due to Jurisdictional Concerns*

Washington, D.C. – The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) today pledged to redouble efforts to include a water system climate change adaptation program in the cap-and-trade legislation moving through the House of Representatives, following last week’s decision by the Energy and Commerce Committee not to add the program to H.R. 2454 during markup of the bill. AMWA worked closely with Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) to develop the Water System Adaptation Partnership amendment, but the committee decided against bringing it up for a vote because of concerns that it could allow other House committees to assert jurisdiction over additional sections of the legislation.

“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. “AMWA’s Water System Adaptation Partnership program would have addressed this by authorizing competitive water utility grants to fund adaptation projects, but unfortunately the amendment was not voted on because committee staffers raised concerns that the proposal would have given other House committees an opportunity to shape portions of the bill.”

Under AMWA’s proposal, each year EPA would solicit climate change adaptation project applications from water systems, and award matching funds to proposals that would help utilities address the most significant climate-related risks and benefit the largest numbers of water users. AMWA and other water and wastewater organizations supported the amendment because the ‘American Clean Energy and Security Act’ as introduced included no direct mechanism to help local water systems adapt their operations to climate change impacts.

“While last week’s development was a setback, it is not the end of the process,” VanDe Hei continued. “The water sector will continue to work with Congresswoman Capps and other supporters in the weeks ahead to further improve the proposal and prepare it for introduction as an amendment to H.R. 2454 on the House floor later this year. Additionally, we will circulate the proposal to other members of Congress to further build support for water and wastewater utility climate adaptation assistance. America’s water systems are beginning to plan for different climate scenarios, and the Water System Adaptation Partnership program would represent a major step toward helping them put these plans into action.”

A copy of the amendment proposed by Congresswoman Capps is attached.

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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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