



October 5, 2018

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Cardin and Senator Wicker:

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) is pleased to offer our support for your efforts to address drinking water affordability through the Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act of 2018. The affordability of drinking water for low-income households is an issue of growing urgency, so we welcome your attention to this topic.

The need for additional investment in our nation’s water infrastructure is well documented. EPA’s most recent Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, completed earlier this year, estimated that communities across the country will have to spend nearly \$473 billion over the next 20 years on drinking water infrastructure, just to maintain current levels of service. Meanwhile, new state and federal regulations, associated compliance costs, and the need for new investments to improve resiliency will only add to this price tag. Local ratepayers will ultimately bear the burden of these increasing costs, but we recognize that increasing rates pose unique challenges to low-income households.

The Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act will begin to address this issue by establishing a competitive pilot program that will offer grant funding to a select number of communities – both large and small – across the country. Grantees will use the funds to support low-income affordability pilot programs, while documenting which programmatic approaches are most successful in achieving positive outcomes for low-income customers. At the conclusion of the pilots, the lessons learned by participating communities could help inform a more comprehensive federal drinking water affordability policy.

Ensuring water affordability for low-income households will remain an important objective for all communities in the years ahead. The federal government will have a role to play in this effort, so AMWA appreciates your efforts to begin this discussion. The Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act is an important first step, and we look forward to working with you to move this legislation forward.

Sincerely,

Diane VanDe Hei
Chief Executive Officer

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