



March 2, 2016

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby and Ranking Member Mikulski:

As the Senate prepares to consider the FY17 Commerce–Justice–Science Appropriations bill, the Water Utility Climate Alliance (WUCA), the Associations of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), the American Water Works Association (AWWA), and the Water Research Foundation (WRF) would like to express our support for President Obama’s \$52.7 million request for the Regional Climate Data and Information program at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

WUCA is a coalition of 10 of the largest water providers in the United States, that together supply drinking water to more than 43 million people nationwide, and provides leadership in assessing and adapting to the potential effects of climate change through collaborative action. **AMWA** is an organization of the largest publicly owned drinking water systems in the United States, and its membership serves more than 130 million Americans with safe drinking water. **WRF** is an internationally recognized leader in water research dedicated to advancing the science of water by sponsoring cutting-edge research and promoting collaboration. With approximately 50,000 members, **AWWA** is the largest nonprofit, scientific and educational association dedicated to managing and treating water. Together these four professional water organizations guide and support nearly all water utilities across the country.

Funding for NOAA’s Regional Climate Data and Information program would increase from its FY16 enacted level of \$38 million to \$52.7 million under the President’s plan, and funding for the Regional Integrated Sciences and Assessments (RISA) program specifically would increase from \$5.872 million to \$9.784 million in FY17. Any amount short of the President’s plan would reduce the resources available for accurate short- and long-term weather forecasting, which is essential in enabling communities to plan for and

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respond to extreme events including drought, wildfires, heat waves, flooding, and major storms. These programs also collect, disseminate, and synthesize important data needed by water utilities to prepare for and adapt to hazards.

As stewards of the environment and providers of critically important human health and safety resources, water utilities take extreme weather impacts seriously. Preparing for hazards and adapting to a changing climate are particularly important issues for maintaining water system resilience. A strong federal investment is needed to ensure the Regional Climate Data and Information program is able to maintain critical efforts related to drinking water, coastal flooding, wildfires, drought preparedness, climate change adaptation, and public health. These efforts are vital to the public utilities that work to protect the nation's water supplies and plan, develop, and deliver high-quality drinking water.

We ask that you please support the requested \$52.7 million for these programs to ensure that we can continue to provide critical water services in spite of the effects of extreme weather and climate impacts, and the resulting hydrologic change that can negatively affect our water supply sources.

Thank you for your consideration.

We look forward to working with you on this important national issue.

Sincerely,

Water Utility Climate Alliance
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
Water Research Foundation
American Water Works Association