

# AMWA Applauds Signing of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act

November 15, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Today, the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) praised President Biden's signing into law of H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, bipartisan legislation that includes nearly \$50 billion in new funding for key drinking water and wastewater programs at EPA. The legislation also authorizes several new AMWA-backed programs to help water systems build resilience to climate change and provide assistance to low-income ratepayers.

"For too long, the needs of drinking water systems have been an afterthought in infrastructure funding discussions," said AMWA CEO Diane VanDe Hei. "The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act reverses this trend by investing billions of dollars in priorities like removing lead service lines, addressing emerging contaminants, and making other critical investments in the nation's water systems. AMWA thanks Congress and the Biden Administration for their hard work in making this legislation a reality."

Some of the highlights of the legislation signed into law today are as follows:

## **Nearly \$50 billion in New Water Infrastructure Funding Over Five Years**

H.R. 3684 appropriates \$48.4 billion in new spending for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure programs at EPA, spread out over the next five years. This includes:

- \$11.713 billion for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF);
- \$11.713 billion for the Clean Water SRF;
- \$15 billion for lead service line replacement projects and "associated activities directly connected to the identification, planning, design, and replacement of lead service lines"; and
- \$10 billion to help drinking water and wastewater systems address emerging contaminants like PFAS.

## **The Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act**

The Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act includes the text of S. 914, the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act of 2021, which the Senate originally passed with AMWA's support in April. These provisions will authorize or reauthorize several drinking water and wastewater programs at EPA, but additional action by Congress will be required each year to appropriate funds for these programs. Key authorizations in the bill include:

- The DWSRF and CWSRF are each reauthorized at \$14.65 billion over five years;

- The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program is reauthorized at \$50 million per year for five years;
- EPA's Reducing Lead in Drinking Water Grants program is reauthorized at \$100 million per year for five years. The program is also reformed to allow these federal funds to be used to replace the privately-owned portions of lead service lines of all households regardless of their income level;
- The Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program for small drinking water systems is reauthorized at \$25 million per year for five years; and
- A new Rural and Low-Income Water Assistance Pilot Program is created at EPA, through which the agency will award up to 40 grants to support municipally operated water and wastewater affordability programs. However, no funding is authorized for the program.

### **Drinking Water and Wastewater System Climate and Cyber Resilience**

Also included in S. 914, and thus carried into H.R. 3684, are authorizations for two new EPA grant programs intended to help large drinking water systems and wastewater systems of all sizes adapt their infrastructure to withstand the effects of climate change, extreme weather, and cyber threats.

Section 50107 of H.R. 3684 establishes the Midsize and Large Drinking Water System Resilience and Sustainability Program at EPA. Authorized at \$50 million per year for five years, the program is intended to aid the climate resilience efforts of drinking water systems that do not serve small or disadvantaged communities (and are therefore ineligible for assistance through the separate Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program).

The new program is open to public water systems that serve communities of 10,000 or more people, which can apply for EPA grants to increase resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events or to reduce cybersecurity vulnerabilities. Half the grant funding awarded by EPA will be reserved for eligible systems serving 10,000 or more people but fewer than 100,000, while the remainder will be dedicated to eligible systems serving 100,000 or more people.

Recipients may use funding on programs or projects that increase natural hazard or extreme weather resilience or reduce cybersecurity vulnerabilities, through:

- Water conservation or enhancement of water-use efficiency;
- Modification or relocation of existing drinking water infrastructure at risk of significant impairment by natural hazards or extreme weather events;
- Design or construction of new or modified desalination facilities that serve existing communities;
- Water supply enhancement through watershed management or source water protection;
- Enhancement of energy efficiency or the use or generation of renewable energy in the conveyance or treatment of drinking water;

- Development or implementation of other measures to increase the water system's resilience to natural hazards and extreme weather events or to reduce its cybersecurity vulnerabilities;
- Conservation of water or enhancement of water supply through reuse measures; or
- Formation of regional water partnerships to collaboratively address documented water shortages.

Similarly, Section 50205 creates a Clean Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Program within the Clean Water Act. Authorized at \$25 million per year for five years, the program will offer competitive funding to help wastewater systems carry out projects to reduce vulnerabilities to natural hazards, extreme weather, and cyber threats. Wastewater systems serving communities of all sizes will be able to compete for these funds.

Funding for each of these new programs is only authorized, but not appropriated, in the bill. While this means that dollars will not be immediately available, the formal establishment of the programs by Congress will provide an avenue for climate resilience funds to reach water and wastewater systems through future appropriations by lawmakers.

### **Western Water Programs**

The infrastructure bill provides significant funding for Western water infrastructure, including the promotion of water reuse and recycling activities. The bill appropriates \$8.3 billion in new funding for the Bureau of Reclamation, including \$450 million for a new competitive grant program that would cover up to 25 percent of the cost of Western water recycling and reuse projects that are expected to cost more than \$500 million.

### **Other Provisions**

The enacted version of H.R. 3684 includes numerous other provisions that will affect drinking water systems, such as amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act that require EPA and DHS to identify drinking water systems where cyber attacks could cause the most damage and an expansion of federal Buy America mandates to cover not only iron and steel products, but also any manufactured products used in water and wastewater projects. AMWA plans to closely track implementation of these provisions to ensure that drinking water systems are not negatively affected.

---

**Source URL:** <https://www.amwa.net/press-releases/amwa-applauds-signing-infrastructure-investment-and-jobs-act>