

Citing National Climate Assessment, Drinking Water Suppliers Expect Severe Impacts and Call for Passage of Adaptation Bill

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Adaptation to Cost Communities Billions

Washington, D.C. – The Third National Climate Assessment (NCA) by the U.S. Global Climate Change Research Program released on May 6 conclusively demonstrates that our climate is changing and already affecting communities, particularly where drought has reduced the availability of water supplies and inundation from sea level rise and storms has threatened critical infrastructure.

“Water availability is a critical and growing problem across several states and demands immediate action by Congress,” says Diane VanDe Hei, executive director of the Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA), a national organization of municipal drinking water providers.

Part of the solution is to help water systems develop new sources of water and adapt their facilities to withstand the destructive power of rising oceans and extreme storms. Strategies such as these are expected to cost communities hundreds of billions of dollars. According to AMWA, the total adaptation costs for drinking water and wastewater utilities will fall between \$448 billion and \$944 billion through 2050.

Congress has before it legislation that can help communities weather the impacts of climate change. The “Water Infrastructure Resiliency and Sustainability Act” (H.R. 765 and S. 1508), sponsored by Rep. Lois Capps (D-Calif.) and Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.), authorizes a new competitive funding program at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to aid water systems in adapting to changing hydrological conditions, including those resulting from global climate change. The legislation is widely supported by national water and environmental groups but has not advanced beyond initial introduction.

“According to the NCA, our national economy, security and culture depend on the resilience of urban infrastructure systems, underscoring the need for the Administration to get behind the Capps-Cardin legislation,” said VanDe Hei.

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