



April 13, 2016

The Honorable Ben Cardin
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cardin:

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) is pleased to express its support for your recent legislation to boost federal investments in drinking water infrastructure, help communities and homeowners make progress in efforts to replace lead service lines, and identify and investigate areas where children are threatened by excessive lead exposure.

The water crisis in Flint, Michigan has focused the nation’s attention on the state of our water infrastructure and the importance of minimizing risks associated with drinking water that has come into contact with lead service lines, interior plumbing components or solder. While AMWA is working with the Environmental Protection Agency to update the federal Lead and Copper Rule, the association also believes that Congress should offer additional resources to help communities and individual at-risk homeowners reduce the prevalence of components that can allow lead to seep into tap water in homes. We also support efforts to take early action to identify communities with clusters of elevated blood levels in children so the cause may be detected and response actions promptly undertaken.

With these goals in mind, AMWA is pleased to support:

- S. 2588, the “Grants and Education To Tackle Homeowner Exposure to Lead Ensuring America Drinks Only from Unpolluted Taps Act” (GET THE LEAD OUT Act). The \$300 million grant program authorized by the bill would offer funding to help communities carry out lead service line replacement projects. Importantly, the bill would also allow the use of grant funds on the replacement of lead service lines and interior plumbing components on the private property of low-income families. The bill would prevent grant funding from being used on partial lead service line replacements, which evidence shows can actually increase harmful lead exposure in the short-term.
- S. 2583, the “Firm, Unwavering National Dedication to Water Act” (FUND Water Act). EPA’s most recent Drinking Water Needs Survey, issued in 2013, found that the nation’s community water systems require \$384.2 billion worth of investments over the next two

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The Honorable Ben Cardin

April 13, 2016

Page 2

decades, just to maintain current levels of service. But EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), a source of low-cost loans and grants that help communities improve drinking water infrastructure to protect public health, has not been reauthorized since the program began in 1996. This bill would reauthorize the DWSRF and the Clean Water SRF for five years while giving congressional appropriators flexibility to increase program funding levels during that time. The bill represents a strong vote of confidence in the SRFs and AMWA supports this and other efforts to reauthorize the SRF programs.

- S. 2586, the "Thorough Evaluation of State Testing to Kick-start Investigations before Damage is Suffered Act" (TEST KIDS Act). The bill would require states to report to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on the number of state residents aged below 2 years old who have elevated blood lead levels. CDC would then be required to use this information to identify areas with clusters of elevated blood lead levels and conduct investigations to determine the cause. If CDC is provided with the necessary resources to carry out these new responsibilities, then this information will help communities protect public health by taking response actions quickly after lead clusters are identified.

Again, AMWA believes these three bills represent important and effective steps that will help communities take action to improve water infrastructure. We look forward to working with you and your staff in support of these and other proposals to ensure the quality of our nation's drinking water.

Sincerely,



Diane VanDe Hei
Chief Executive Officer