

February 23, 2018

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Ken Calvert
Chairman
House Appropriations Subcommittee
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: FY 2019 Funding for National Priorities Water Research

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall/Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

Over the last five years, the Committee's support of the National Priorities Water Research program has advanced the science of priority research topics through applied, extramural research projects. This successful program provides direct benefit to water sector utilities through increased knowledge, tools, and models that can improve public health outcomes and lower costs for municipalities. However, more funding is needed. Today, we urge Congress to increase funding for the National Priorities Water Research grant program to \$20 million for fiscal year 2019. The increase in funding

for this competitive grant program will support transformative research approaches that will enable the water sector to respond to current and future challenges.

Since 2012, Congress supported the National Priorities Water Research grant program by providing approximately \$4 million in EPA's Science and Technology Account. Extramural research enables Federal agencies to focus research on the most pressing national needs of the water sector. In the past two years, Congress has appropriated between \$600–\$700 million for EPA research. However, less than 15% of EPA's Science and Technology Account funding is dedicated to water-related research and less than 1% of these funds supports the National Priorities Water Research grant program and results in applied research for water utilities.

The water sector is experiencing a marked transformation. Impacted by global trends including changing weather patterns, water scarcity, population shifts, and an aging infrastructure, Mazar's USA Water Group is projecting that more than 50% of U.S. water utilities are predicting a yearly increase of more than 5% for new capital expenditures on infrastructure. Research aimed at cost-effective solutions to these water sector challenges can increase our understanding and also lead to: smarter investment in water infrastructure and transformative technologies; improved methods to mitigate health risks; preservation of watersheds and enhancement to the environment; development and deployment of water reuse technologies that can transform water resource management; and enhanced practices in the energy/water nexus. The water sector needs a strong Federal partner to support the essential water focused research that is required to proactively face the challenges faced by water managers throughout the world.

Our sector is taking the lead by directly funding research and development through its non-profit Water Research Foundation, supporting new technology launching platforms such as the Leaders Innovation Forum for Technology (LIFT) and Utility of the Future, and by pursuing new funding mechanisms like green bonds or public-private partnerships. Notwithstanding these efforts, significant needs go unmet.

A recently completed survey of public wastewater utilities found that the total budget for shovel-ready research and development projects was \$150 million. Needs were identified in the areas of energy recovery, phosphorus recovery, nutrient recovery, intelligent water systems, and post-treatment. Similarly, drinking water utilities have identified priority research needs including; waterborne pathogens in distribution systems, lead and copper management, perfluoroalkyl substances and other emerging contaminants, harmful algal blooms and cyanotoxins, and disinfection byproducts. The sector estimates that it will require an additional \$150 million to begin to research these drinking water topics.

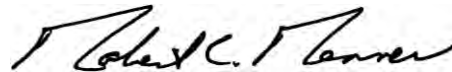
However, the combined estimated \$300 million is only a small snapshot of the entire water sector's real research, development, and demonstration needs. This estimate represents the current research need to allow the sector to respond to immediate regulatory, human health, and infrastructure pressures. Future investment in early-stage, transformative technologies is also needed to allow the sector to grow and adapt. National Priorities Water Research not only benefits the water sector, it also benefits the economy. A recent report from the Value of Water Campaign shows that water infrastructure innovation and investment has the potential to add \$220 billion and support 1.3 million jobs.

We urge you to continue to support and grow the National Priorities Water Research Grant program. This important program is the main source of federal funds that supports collaborative, extramural, cost-shared partnerships with non-profit, water-sector research institutions that address the water sector's research needs. We ask Congress, through increased research funding and programmatic support, to bolster our efforts to develop innovative technologies and transformative solutions to our national water challenges and to fund the National Priorities Water Research Program at \$20 million in fiscal year 2019. Thank you for your consideration.

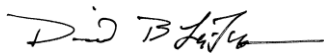
Sincerely,



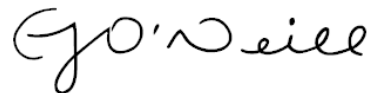
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