



April 25, 2017

The Honorable Ken Calvert, Chair
The Honorable Betty McCollum, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chair
The Honorable Tom Udall, Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
United States Congress
Washington, DC

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

We, the undersigned organizations, are all dedicated to protecting the public health and economic health of communities across the nation through the provision of safe drinking water. We urge Congress to help in this by sustaining funding that allows state drinking water programs to achieve these goals through the Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) grant program, as codified in the Safe Drinking Water Act.

We all understand the escalating need to reinvest in the country's water infrastructure. We endorse actions such as increasing funding for the drinking water state revolving loan fund program (DWSRF) and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program. However, building or renewing infrastructure alone is not the solution for protecting the health of our citizens and the economic health of our communities.

State drinking water programs use PWSS funds to ensure that water utilities have the information, technology, and capabilities to meet their mandated regulatory responsibilities – an essential component of public health protection. Utilizing the PWSS grants, these state programs provide educational programs, training and technical assistance where needed. In other words, the PWSS grant program provides the means for states to work with drinking water utilities to ensure that American citizens can turn on their taps with confidence that the water is both safe to drink and available in adequate quantities.

According to a 2013 resource-needs analysis of state drinking water programs, “...even as resource needs are increasing, the funding availability to support the state drinking water programs in their mission has stagnated...if funding continues at current levels, states will not have adequate funding to support their minimum base programs over the next ten years.” ([Insufficient Resources for State Drinking Water Programs Threaten Public Health: An Analysis of State Drinking Water Programs’ Resources and Needs, December 2013](#))

Federal funding for this vital program has essentially remained flat for the past several years at \$101.9 million. However, the need for state drinking water programs to perform mission-critical functions has never been more important. Funding for this program must not be decreased, particularly given the ever-increasing responsibilities states are taking on in public health protection. Without robust funding, we are shortchanging ourselves.

PWSS funds are distributed to the states, five territories, and the Navajo Nation to provide oversight of approximately 151,000 public water systems; assist in their understanding of their regulatory responsibilities; and assist in consistent compliance and enforcement of drinking water regulations, particularly where public health may be threatened. More than 90% of the U.S. population receives water for bathing, cooking, and drinking from a public water system – overseen by state drinking water program personnel.

Having economically vibrant communities, healthy citizens, a productive workforce, and sound businesses depends on a safe and reliable supply of drinking water. Through the PWSS program, state drinking water programs support the water utilities that are essential to these goals.

Please maintain funding for the PWSS program at least at current levels.

Thank you,

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