



June 5, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Sam Graves
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Environment and Public Works Committee
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Rick Larsen
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairmen Capito and Graves and Ranking Members Whitehouse and Larsen:

The Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies (AMWA) and the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA) are pleased to support H.R. 5966 and S. 3796, the *Ohio River Restoration Program Act of 2026*, sponsored by Representative Morgan McGarvey (D-KY) and Senator John Fetterman (D-PA). This legislation would prioritize federal support for the protection and restoration of the Ohio River and its surrounding areas.

The Ohio River Basin is home to over 30 million people who rely on the river for drinking water, maritime transportation, energy generation, and recreation. There are nearly three-dozen surface water intakes along the Ohio River serving numerous communities, and the river is a primary source of drinking water for more than five million people from cities such as Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, and Louisville. The quality of the river water therefore has a direct impact on public health and the basin's ecosystem.

The Ohio River Restoration Program Act would create a dedicated program office within the Environmental Protection Agency modeled after the past successes of similar programs for the Chesapeake Bay and Great Lakes. The program office would develop an action plan, coordinate federal investments, and execute restoration activities for the Ohio River.

This proactive approach to the protection of the Ohio River Basin would support water systems' ability to provide clean, safe, and affordable drinking water services to their customers. Emphasizing the removal of pollutants to improve water quality bolsters public health, protects the ecosystem, and reduces the risk of public exposure to potentially harmful substances. It is also an economically sound decision, as less inputs are needed to treat water to current standards, leading to decreased costs for both water systems and rate payers.

AMWA and NACWA strongly support passage of the Ohio River Restoration Program Act. We urge your committees to consider this legislation in the context of the upcoming reauthorization of the Water Resources Development Act or other appropriate legislative vehicles.

Sincerely,

Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
National Association of Clean Water Agencies