

March 3, 2023

The Honorable Ed Markey
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Jan Schakowsky
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Markey and Congresswoman Schakowsky,

On behalf of the undersigned organizations representing drinking water and wastewater systems, along with other water sector stakeholders, we write to express our strong support for the Water System Threat Preparedness and Resilience Act.

As you know, it is critically important that the nation's nearly 50,000 community drinking water systems and more than 16,000 wastewater treatment works provide uninterrupted service to Americans from coast to coast, 24 hours per day, seven days per week. But utility managers must do so in an environment of ever-expanding threats that include physical security weaknesses, extreme weather events, and cyberattacks that jeopardize utility operations.

To increase the ability of drinking water and wastewater systems to prepare for and respond to these threats, in 2002 multiple water sector stakeholders collaborated to establish the Water Information Sharing and Analysis Center, or WaterISAC. One of more than two-dozen sector-specific ISACs operating today, WaterISAC collects, analyzes, and disseminates actionable threat information to member drinking water and wastewater systems, while also offering guidance on risk mitigation tools, best practices, and response actions that contribute to an all-hazards resiliency posture.

As an independent non-profit organization, WaterISAC receives no state or federal grant funding and therefore operates as a dues-based subscription service. Currently utility staff from roughly 400 water and wastewater systems, serving more than 221 million Americans, are members of WaterISAC, but with additional resources access to the service could be broadened to even more water utility professionals across the country.

The Water System Threat Preparedness and Resilience Act would expand WaterISAC participation by authorizing a targeted EPA program that would offset costs incurred by community water systems and treatment works associated with maintaining or initiating WaterISAC memberships. The program would also direct EPA to encourage eligible entities to participate in WaterISAC, and to cooperate with WaterISAC on incident data collection and analysis of threats to the water sector.

We also support the Water System Threat Preparedness and Resilience Act because Congress has previously recognized the value of participation in other critical infrastructure ISACs. For example, section 40125(c) of the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-58)

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authorized a new Energy Department program dedicated to expanding Electricity ISAC participation among the nation's electric utilities. Given that the continued preparedness and operations of America's drinking water and wastewater systems are no less vital than that of our power systems, it is essential that WaterISAC memberships be encouraged and supported by the federal government in a similar manner as to that of E-ISAC. This legislation would accomplish this objective by providing similar resources to drinking water and wastewater systems of all sizes to help them participate in WaterISAC's information sharing community.

Again, we express our strong support for the Water System Threat Preparedness and Resilience Act, and we greatly appreciate your leadership in developing this important legislation. We are eager to work with you to support its passage into law at the earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

American Water Works Association
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
National Association of Clean Water Agencies
National Association of Water Companies
Water Environment Federation