

June 22, 2021

Dear Members of the National Capital Region Congressional Delegation:

RE: Allocation of Additional Federal Funding for Water Infrastructure

On behalf of the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee (CBPC) of the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (COG), I am writing to thank Congress for its focus on dedicating funding for water infrastructure, beyond what was provided in recent bills for COVID-19 relief and in preparations for a comprehensive infrastructure and jobs package. We strongly urge Congress to sustain bipartisan support for water this year and in subsequent years.

As the association of local governments and utilities in the metropolitan Washington region, supporting sustained and expanded federal funding for state and local water quality programs is one of COG's 2021 Legislative Priorities.

Outside of the pandemic's fiscal impacts, water programs and utilities are struggling to maintain infrastructure and need to have sustained federal support for the water sector in the infrastructure package. While federal funding amounts to about 60 percent of transportation funding, water infrastructure received less than 4 percent of its funding from federally subsidized sources in recent years.

A very positive step was taken on June 9th when the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee (T&I) reauthorized the SRF program for the first time since 1987 and approved authorizing \$40 billion over five years for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF). The House also specified more of this funding would be in the form of grants. The complimentary Senate bill provides funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

Congress can improve our nation's water infrastructure and keep our economy going strong by adhering to these funding mechanisms:

1. Increase grants available to local governments to fund drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater improvements. Utilities cannot afford to take out more loans, which would result in rate increases for ratepayers.
2. Continue to authorize and appropriate funding for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, and WIFIA.
3. Provide permanent assistance in the form of grants for low-income water ratepayers.

Investing in water infrastructure is a bipartisan win for our country. It addresses environmental inequalities, and at the same time helps our communities be more sustainable and resilient.

Thank you for your continued support for water as these bills get reconciled, and your sustained support for water investment in future years. Please contact Steve Bieber, COG's Water Resources Program Director at (202) 962-3219 or sbieber@mwkog.org if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Laurie-Anne Sayles". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie-Anne Sayles
Chair, Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee
City of Gaithersburg