



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

Your Comprehensive
Public Works Resource

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May 1, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Carper
Ranking Member
Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper:

On behalf of the American Public Works Association (APWA) and our more than 30,000 members, I am writing to thank you for your continued work and focus on our nation's infrastructure. A perfect example of this focus is your work on "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020" and "Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020." APWA is appreciative of your efforts to craft these important bipartisan bills to address water infrastructure issues. We are especially appreciative of your work to include language that will make public works agencies eligible for federal water workforce funding, as well as reauthorizing and increasing funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program, and reauthorizing the Water Infrastructure Finance Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.

The language in Section 2008 of "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020"

- reauthorizes an existing competitive grant program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) that assists in getting people into the pipeline for careers in the water sector;
- doubles the funding to \$2 million annually through fiscal year 2024;
- provides a definition for public works departments and agencies that specifically makes those entities eligible for these funds. In practice, public works departments and agencies are already providing credentialing and accreditation for those interested in joining the water workforce, helping to develop the next generation water sector professionals. Allowing public works agencies and departments to access these federal funds will provide needed assistance in identifying, training, and retaining the next generation of water sector professionals.

Reauthorization of the CWSRF program is also vital to helping bring our water infrastructure into a state of good repair. The CWSRF is an important tool used across all 50 states and in communities of all sizes to help communities make investments more affordably. Increasing funding for the program to a maximum of \$3 billion in FY 2023 will help communities meet the massive demand for infrastructure investment across the nation. Additionally, reauthorizing the WIFIA program will aid communities looking to undertake large-scale water infrastructure projects that would overwhelm the SRF allotment for that state. Combined use of CWSRF and WIFIA programs will greatly increase the federal funding for water infrastructure investment.

APWA is extremely supportive of the work your Committee has done to address the issues surrounding water infrastructure in our country. Specifically, we are pleased to see inclusion of the following provisions in "America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020":

- Sewer overflow control grants (Sec. 2007);
- Water infrastructure and workforce investment (Sec. 2008);
- Water Infrastructure Finance Reauthorization (Sec. 2014);
- Reauthorization of Clean Water State Revolving Funds (Sec. 2015); and

PRESIDENT
William E. (Bill) Spearman III, P.E.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson



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- Wastewater Infrastructure Discretionary Grant program (Sec. 2016).

We are also pleased to see the following provisions included in the “Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020”:

- Lead Mapping Pilot Program (Sec. 7);
- Operational Sustainability of Small Public Water Systems (Sec. 8);
- Needs Assessment for Nationwide Rural and Urban Low-Income Community Water Assistance (Sec. 10); and
- Drinking Water Infrastructure Discretionary Grant Program (Sec. 14).

All these elements, combined with language enabling the Army Corps of Engineers to undertake important projects throughout the country, combine to make this bill a positive step in finding solutions to our nation’s water infrastructure problems.

However, APWA members are disappointed that language related to the National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES program) was not included in “America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020”. We urge you to add this important language to the bill. In October of last year, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee unanimously passed a bill reauthorizing the CWSRF program that included language that would extend permit lifecycles from five years to 10 years under the NPDES program. For these agencies that have a proven track record of compliance with NPDES, a 10-year term for a NPDES permit would be much more efficient than the current 5-year term, due to the inordinate amount of time, effort, and expense involved in reviewing permits every five years. These costs are all resources that are used on the permitting process rather than actual permit implementation. The processes involved in the permit, including watershed planning and development of Total Maximum Daily Load levels, have lengthy implementation schedules, often longer than five years. APWA and its members are happy to discuss this change to the NPDES program and how it can be incorporated in the final version of this legislation.

Each day public works professionals are diligently working to protect and maintain the critical infrastructure that is so essential to protecting our health and quality of life. Because of our shared commitment, APWA looks forward to continuing to work with you and your staff on this legislation to help public works professionals meet our water infrastructure challenges. If you have questions or comments regarding this letter or APWA’s water priorities, please contact APWA Government Affairs Manager Sean Garcia at (202)218-6734 or sgarcia@apwa.net.

Sincerely,

William (Bill) Spearman, III, P.E.
President

Scott Grayson, CAE
Chief Executive Officer

PRESIDENT
William E. (Bill) Spearman III, P.E.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Scott D. Grayson