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Executive Director
Ken Kirk

Association of
Metropolitan
Sewerage Agencies

February 14, 2005

The Honorable Dave Camp
137 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: H.R. 624 – Authorization for Sewer Overflow Grants

The Association of Metropolitan Sewerage Agencies (AMSA) supports H.R. 624, a bill introduced in the U.S. House of Representatives to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations for sewer overflow control grants. AMSA appreciates your leadership on this bill, and that of the co-sponsors of H.R. 624, to authorize \$250 million a year for six years (Fiscal Years 2006-2011) for combined sewer overflow (CSO) and sanitary sewer overflow (SSO) control projects.

Similar authorization efforts in the past never received appropriations, despite the massive CSO and SSO control expenses facing many communities. This bill gives us the hope that the wet weather grant program will be fully funded in line with the legislators' original intent, providing cities across the country with additional grant funds to help pay for critical and costly wet weather control projects.

While the nation's clean water utilities are appreciative of your effort, the water infrastructure funding gap remains a real and present challenge for communities across the nation. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Congressional Budget Office, the Government Accountability Office, and the Water Infrastructure Network all estimate a water infrastructure funding gap in the hundreds of billions of dollars.

For wet weather projects alone, EPA recently estimated that SSO communities need to spend more than \$80 billion, not including operations & maintenance costs, to achieve a goal of no more than one SSO every five years. Similarly, EPA estimates a current, documented funding need of over \$50 billion to control CSOs in the nation's 772 CSO communities. Simply put, the needs are staggering – H.R. 624 offers a solid step toward addressing these needs.

AMSA has consistently advocated for dedicated clean water funding through a trust fund similar to those that already exist for the nation's highways and airports. Given your leadership on clean water issues, we look forward to discussing this issue further with you in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K Kirk". The signature is stylized with a large "K" and a cursive "Kirk".

Ken Kirk
Executive Director