

American Council of Engineering Companies ♦ American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees ♦ American Society of Civil Engineers ♦ American Rivers ♦ Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies ♦ Association of State and Interstate Water Pollution Control Administrators ♦ Clean Water Action ♦ Coalition for Alternative Wastewater Treatment ♦ Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities ♦ Friends of the Earth ♦ National Association of Clean Water Agencies ♦ National Association of Counties ♦ National Utility Contractors Association ♦ Natural Resources Defense Council ♦ Physicians for Social Responsibility ♦ Public Citizen ♦ Sierra Club ♦ U.S. Public Interest Research Group ♦ Water and Wastewater Equipment Manufacturers Association, Inc. ♦ Water Environment Federation

Support at least \$2.2 billion for Clean Water & Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds!

June 8, 2005

Chairman Thad Cochran
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Robert C. Byrd
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-125A, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Conrad Burns
Interior and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
132 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Byron Dorgan
Interior and Related
Agencies Subcommittee
Senate Appropriations Committee
123 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

The diverse organizations above represent municipal authorities, community drinking water and wastewater utilities, engineers, state water regulators, financial officers, labor organizations, consumers, contractors, manufacturers, and environmental groups dedicated to improving America's water and wastewater infrastructure. We write on behalf of our millions of members and supporters who urge you to protect human health and the environment and create jobs by increasing to at least \$1.35 billion the appropriated amount for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) and maintaining \$850 million for the EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund in the FY 06 Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act.

On May 2, Sens. Sarbanes, Chafee, Jeffords, and Snowe, with the support of 47 Senate colleagues, wrote a letter to the Senate Appropriations Committee in support of a \$2.2 billion appropriation for the SRF programs. This funding level will help local communities meet water quality standards, protect public health, repair and replace old and decaying pipelines and treatment plants, and ensure continued progress in restoring the health and safety of America's water bodies.

Appropriating at least \$1.35 billion for clean water funding and \$850 million for safe drinking water next year would provide a badly-needed down payment to improve America's water and wastewater infrastructure and would stop adding to the already significant backlog of projects. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that nearly \$20 billion is needed annually to protect our clean water; this is far more than \$3.4 billion that the Administration has targeted as the annual federal investment in clean water funding.

Providing \$2.2 billion for clean and safe drinking water would create an estimated 103,400 American jobs. This would aid the national economic recovery by keeping good paying jobs in local communities. Moreover, it is estimated that there are billions of dollars of projects ready to move forward in less than 90 days if funding is made available, creating considerable jobs in the near future.

When the Clean Water Act was passed more than 30 years ago, the federal government made a commitment to the American people to clean up the nation's waters. Since that time the federal government's funding to maintain clean water infrastructure in America has decreased by 70%; today the federal government funds a mere 10% of national infrastructure costs. In 1996, the Safe Drinking Water Act expanded the federal government's role in assuring clean and safe water for every citizen, but the additional funds that were appropriated to help insure safe drinking water were offset by a simultaneous decrease in clean water funding that furthered the decline in federal share going to clean water needs in the states and local communities throughout the nation. Much has been accomplished but there is still more work left to be done. States, localities, and private sources addressing these problems cannot do it alone.

We again urge you to support at least a \$1.35 billion and \$850 million appropriation for the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund programs respectively in the FY 06 Interior Appropriations bill, and we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

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American Society of Civil Engineers
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Pollution Control Administrators
Clean Water Action
Coalition for Alternative Wastewater
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Council of Infrastructure Financing
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Friends of the Earth
National Association of Clean Water
Agencies
National Association of Counties
National Utility Contractors Association
Natural Resources Defense Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Public Citizen
Sierra Club
U.S. Public Interest Research Group
Water and Wastewater Equipment
Manufacturers Association, Inc.
Water Environment Federation

Cc: Senate Appropriations Committee Members