

January 14, 2004

Via Telecopier, Electronic Mail, U.S. Mail

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt  
Administrator  
United States Environmental Protection Agency  
Ariel Rios Building  
Mail Code 1101A  
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.  
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Leavitt,

The organizations below strongly support a final U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Clean Water Act (CWA) blending policy. A national blending policy is essential to the cities across the country that use blending to manage and provide clean water treatment to unpredictable, exceptionally heavy rain and snow melt. As EPA knows, with blending municipalities can treat significantly increased wastewater volumes in wet weather, avoid serious adverse impacts on plant operations, and protect public health and water quality.

Activist groups are blatantly mischaracterizing EPA's November 7, 2003 blending proposal as an "environmental rollback" to further their agenda, which is consistently critical of EPA. Distorting the facts, these groups have called blending the "release of raw sewage," a threat to Americans and our nation's water resources, a reduction in CWA protection, and a departure from historic EPA practice.

The truth is that blended effluent fully meets CWA permit requirements. Blending protects public utility infrastructure, and prevents sewer backups into homes and businesses. A final blending policy will increase permitting consistency and make more information publicly available on a long-standing, EPA-approved wet weather management practice – far from a rollback. A final policy also will recognize that already scarce public resources must be used to support meaningful, environmentally beneficial water protection efforts at the local level.

We urge you to finalize a national blending policy as soon as possible based on the sound water quality and public health considerations that have supported this wastewater management practice for decades.

Sincerely,

NATIONAL LEAGUE OF CITIES  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES  
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TOWNS AND TOWNSHIPS  
ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE AGENCIES  
ASSOCIATION OF OHIO METROPOLITAN WASTEWATER AGENCIES  
BAY AREA CLEAN WATER AGENCIES, CA  
CALIFORNIA ASSOCIATION OF SANITATION AGENCIES (CASA)

COALITION OF GREATER MINNESOTA CITIES  
CSO PARTNERSHIP  
FLORIDA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION UTILITY COUNCIL  
MARYLAND ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER AGENCIES  
MINNESOTA ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & ECONOMIC REVIEW BOARD  
NEW ENGLAND WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION  
NEW JERSEY ASSOCIATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL AUTHORITIES  
NEW JERSEY WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION  
PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL AUTHORITIES ASSOCIATION  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ALLIANCE OF POTW<sub>s</sub>  
SOUTH CAROLINA WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION  
TENNESSEE ASSOCIATION OF UTILITY DISTRICTS  
TENNESSEE MUNICIPAL LEAGUE  
TENNESSEE WATER QUALITY MANAGERS ASSOCIATION  
TEXAS ASSOCIATION OF METROPOLITAN SEWERAGE AGENCIES  
Tri-TAC (A TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE SPONSORED BY LEAGUE OF  
CALIFORNIA CITIES, CASA, & CALIFORNIA WATER ENVIRONMENT ASSOCIATION)  
VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF MUNICIPAL WASTEWATER AGENCIES  
WEST VIRGINIA MUNICIPAL WATER QUALITY ASSOCIATION

cc: Benjamin Grumbles, Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, U.S. EPA  
James Hanlon, Director, Office of Wastewater Management, U.S. EPA  
Kevin Weiss, Chemical Engineer, Water Permits Division, U.S. EPA