



NEWEA
WORKING FOR WATER QUALITY

New England Water Environment Association, Inc.
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April 4, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chairman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Barbara Mikulski
Vice Chairwoman
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran, Vice Chairwoman Mikulski, Chairman Murkowski, and Ranking Member Udall:

As the Appropriations Committee begins to develop legislation to fund EPA in the 2017 fiscal year, the New England Water Environment Association would like to express our continuing support for strong funding for programs that help provide clean and safe water infrastructure while making local utility investments more manageable for ratepayers.

As you know, the ongoing water crisis in Flint, Michigan has focused national attention on the needs of our water infrastructure. This has prompted welcome proposals by some members of Congress to dramatically boost water infrastructure spending next year. One such proposal would provide \$2 billion each to the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs), well-established programs that deliver funding to all states to help communities improve their water and wastewater infrastructure to protect public health. These programs also support our nation's economy, both directly in the form of additional good jobs and indirectly through water and wastewater services that support our businesses and a healthier environment. Our organizations support these efforts to dramatically increase SRF funding in the 2017 fiscal year while bringing parity to Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF funding levels.

We also recognize that the budgetary situation faced by Congress may prevent total SRF appropriations from reaching these levels in FY17. If that is the case, at minimum we urge Congress to reject any cuts to the Clean Water SRF in 2017, and to bring the Drinking Water SRF to an equal level of funding.

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While attaining strong SRF funding levels is essential, we also urge Congress to deliver robust funding to other important water infrastructure programs, such as:

- \$35 million for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) pilot program, its fully authorized level in FY17. As EPA plans to begin issuing WIFIA loans in FY17, fully funding the program will help communities to begin accessing these new infrastructure loans as quickly as possible.
- \$23.365 million for Title XVI, which is the amount enacted in FY16, and support for other drought response and water reuse projects at the Bureau of Reclamation.
- \$6.5 million to continue EPA's Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach (Integrated Planning), which helps communities address their EPA regulations cost-effectively and strategically.

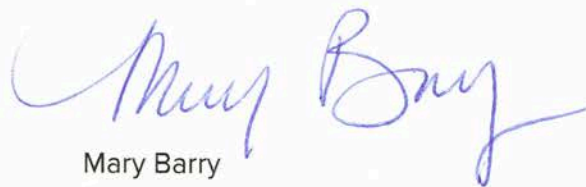
Providing these funding levels will help our nation's water and wastewater systems begin to address the billions of dollars of investment needs they face in the coming decades. EPA has reported that our wastewater systems face \$271 billion in documented needs over the next twenty years—investments in publicly owned wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities, combined sewer overflow correction, and stormwater management. Drinking water systems require \$384 billion in documented infrastructure rehabilitation and improvements over the same timeframe according to EPA, and over \$1 Trillion according to the American Water Works Association. With the crisis in Flint renewing national attention on water infrastructure, now is the time to take a stand by appropriating strong funding to the programs that help our communities ensure the ongoing delivery and treatment of clean and safe water.

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration, and please do not hesitate to contact NEWEA for additional information.

Sincerely,



Raymond Willis III
President
New England Water Environment Association



Mary Barry
Executive Director
New England Water Environment Association