



**Written Statement
By The Clean Water Council**

to the

**United States Senate
Committee on Environment and Public Works**

**Information-Gathering Process on Draft Legislation
America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020
Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020**

The Clean Water Council (CWC) is a coalition of national organizations representing utility and excavation contractors, design professionals, manufacturers and suppliers, labor unions, construction materials, and others committed to ensuring a high quality of life through sound water infrastructure. As members of the Clean Water Council, we appreciate the opportunity to comment on recent legislation introduced that would make progress towards the much-needed refurbishment of America's water and wastewater infrastructure.

Adequate Funding is Needed for Effective Programs

The CWC appreciates the committee's action on water infrastructure, but feels that more is needed. While the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (AWIA) and the Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (DWIA) are a step in the right direction, they do not go nearly far enough in providing the funding levels needed for certain programs. Marginal increases to the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) are not nearly sufficient to bridge the necessary investment gap.

Our nation's underground water infrastructure ensures that Americans have access to clean drinking water, removes wastewater from homes and businesses, provides businesses with the resources they need to keep our economy moving, and protects our nation's waterways, beaches, and other recreational opportunities. Taken together, well-functioning water infrastructure is indispensable to the health of our country.

As drinking water and wastewater systems continue to age and the costs of compliance with environmental requirements mount, communities face increasing difficulties in paying for needed improvements. At the same time, the federal government has contributed a decreasing share of the total funding provided for water utility infrastructure. Federal spending accounted for just 4% of all

spending on water utility infrastructure in 2017. Current EPA assessments put national funding needs at around half a trillion dollars – a figure which will only grow the longer the necessary work is neglected.

We urge Congress to take things a step further by supporting SRF reauthorizations such as H.R. 1497, the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act, for long-term solutions to our water infrastructure funding needs.

Opportunities for Private Investment

The CWC understands the need to provide relief to local government entities, as provided in both the AWIA and DWIA – however, this should not come at the expense to long-term national needs for water/wastewater infrastructure projects. Both AWIA and DWIA should include significant increases in authorized funding for both the Clean Water and Drinking Water SRF programs. These programs have a track record of proven success with the resources they have been provided – with adequate funding they could do much more to address America’s critical water infrastructure needs.

In addition to traditional public funding, Congress should consider measures that would open the door for more private sector investment through innovative financing, such as lifting the cap on private activity bonds (PABs) for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. While this would require action by the Senate Finance Committee, we encourage the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee to consider the advantages of PAB reform for these essential infrastructure projects.

Removing the PAB state volume cap increases private investment and capital investment, and enables more public-private partnerships, decreasing the risk placed on local governments. Additional investment would lead to thousands of high-paying jobs at a time when Americans need them most.

More Investment Equals a Real Impact

The CWC applauds Congress for taking action to address America’s water infrastructure challenges, and appreciates the opportunity to comment on both bills. However, given the magnitude of the national need, lawmakers will have to include much more investment in both the AWIA and the DWIA for this legislation to have a real impact.

With proper funding, Congress has the change to put Americans back to work on critical infrastructure projects that not only create tens of thousands of jobs but also improve public health and safety, enhance environmental protections, and raise the quality of life for the average American. The CWC looks forward to working with Congress over the coming months to further our nation’s commitment to clean water and economic growth.

For additional information, the Clean Water Council is available at www.cleanwatercouncil.net.

Submitted by the following Members of the Clean Water Council:

National Utility Contractors Association
American Council of Engineering Companies
American Concrete Pipe Association
Associated Equipment Distributors
Association of Equipment Manufacturers
Associated General Contractors of America
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Supply Association
Distribution Contractors Association
Ductile Iron Pipe Research Association
National Association of Sewer Service Companies
National Ready Mixed Concrete Association
National Stone, Sand, and Gravel Association
National Utility Locating Contractors Association
Plastics Pipe Institute
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