



June 26, 2018

Dear Member of Congress,

As you know, many communities across the country are incurring increasing financial burdens to comply with Clean Water Act (CWA) requirements. These costs impose a significant burden on local ratepayers, especially those at low and fixed incomes, and impact the ability of local governments to make needed investments in their clean water infrastructure.

To address this universal challenge, we ask that you cosponsor the Water Infrastructure Improvement Act. This new legislation will codify the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Integrated Planning Framework (IP Framework) and provide the flexibility to help local governments and clean water utilities spend their limited financial resources in a targeted manner that achieves the most effective water quality improvements.

EPA initiated the IP Framework in 2012 at the urging and assistance of our organizations. The IP Framework approach allows local governments to examine all of their CWA obligations together in a comprehensive fashion and propose a compliance strategy to address those obligations in the most cost-effective way. This integrated planning approach, which was initiated by the previous administration and continues to be implemented, has garnered wide bipartisan support. It has proven to be a very effective tool that has empowered some local governments to better meet their CWA obligations in a manner that achieves the maximum environmental benefit for local ratepayers' dollars.

While integrated planning has been an important success thus far, our organizations believe that it is time for the IP Framework initiative to be codified into the CWA itself, so that all communities going forward can use this program to improve water quality in the most effective and efficient way. This new bill would do just that.

The Water Infrastructure Improvement Act is directed toward the key goal that we think must be achieved: promoting and ensuring widespread, long-term use of the integrated planning program to achieve environmental benefits and to spend ratepayer funds wisely. The bill also advances other important goals, including promoting the use of green infrastructure approaches to improve water quality in a way that can be less capital-intensive and generate many other community benefits.

Bills addressing integrated planning have been introduced over the last few years in both the House and the Senate. In developing this new bill, our organizations have worked in a collaborative fashion to build upon the most beneficial, bipartisan elements from existing bills in a way that we believe also acknowledges and carefully addresses concerns that have been raised about previous proposals. Most importantly, this proposal incorporates the goals of integrated planning without making any changes to the basic structure of the CWA and without weakening any of the water quality requirements in the statute.

A summary of the bill is attached, and we look forward to discussing this bill with you. If you have any questions, or would like more information, please contact us: Judy Sheahan (USCM) at 202-861-6775 or jsheahan@usmayors.org; Carolyn Berndt (NLC) at 202-626-3101 or berndt@nlc.org; Julie Ufner (NACo) at 202-942-4269 or jufner@naco.org; Kristina Surfus (NACWA) at 202-833-4655 or ksurfus@nacwa.org; Sean Garcia (APWA) at 202-218-6374 or sgarcia@apwa.net; or Leslie Wollack (NARC) at 202-618-5696 or leslie@narc.org.

Sincerely,

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