



October 17, 2019

The Honorable Ben Cardin  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cardin and Senator Capito:

The undersigned organizations are pleased to express our support for S. 2636, the Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act of 2019. This legislation builds upon a program established by Congress last year to ensure that our nation’s drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure is able to withstand the variety of threats posed by extreme weather and climate change.

It is well documented that communities across the United States are facing escalating threats from extreme weather events, some of which may be exacerbated by climate change. From severe storms in the East to a return of drought conditions in the West, these natural hazards and other departures from historical hydrologic and weather conditions pose significant challenges to the nation’s drinking water, wastewater and stormwater utilities. The cost of adapting to these new conditions is expected to be significant.

Section 2005 of America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 began to address this challenge by authorizing EPA to create a new Drinking Water System Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program. The program will offer competitive grants to help communities enhance water supply options and increase the resilience of their drinking water systems to natural hazards such as floods, hurricanes, wildfires, or other hydrologic changes. Congress authorized EPA to spend up to \$8 million on the program over two years.

While Section 2005 represents a good start, the program is only available to drinking water systems serving disadvantaged communities, or communities of fewer than 10,000 people. This leaves the drinking water systems serving most of the nation’s population – and all wastewater and stormwater utilities – ineligible for the program.

S. 2636 builds on Section 2005 in three important ways. First, it authorizes a companion Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program aimed at protecting communities’ wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Second, it expands eligibility for the existing drinking water program to communities of all sizes. Finally, it extends the authorization of each program through 2024. We strongly support each of these objectives.

Under S. 2636, drinking water and wastewater systems will be encouraged to utilize innovative infrastructure approaches that will serve as models for other communities struggling with similar challenges related to natural hazards. In sum, the legislation will urge communities across the country to build resilience into their infrastructure today, while helping ensure uninterrupted water and wastewater service for decades to come.

Senator Ben Cardin  
Senator Shelley Moore Capito  
October 17, 2019  
Page 2 of 2

Again, we support S. 2636, the Clean Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act, as an important step in our nation's effort to prepare its critical infrastructure for extreme weather events and climate change. We thank you for your leadership on this issue, and look forward to working with you toward the passage of this legislation.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association  
Association of California Water Agencies  
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies  
Association of Regional Water Organizations  
California Association of Sanitation Agencies  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies  
US Water Alliance  
Water Environment Federation  
WaterReuse Association  
Water Utility Climate Alliance