

Written Statement on FY 2021 Requests
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
United States Senate
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Thank you for the opportunity to present our FY 2021 funding requests. The WaterReuse Association (WRA) is a not-for-profit trade association for water utilities, businesses, industrial and commercial enterprises, non-profit organizations, and research entities that engage in and on water reuse. WRA and its state and regional sections represent more than 200 water utilities serving over 60 million customers, and over 300 businesses and organizations across the country. WRA's mission is to engage its members in a movement for safe and sustainable water supplies, to promote acceptance and support of recycled water, and to advocate for policies and funding that increase water reuse. As you begin the FY 2021 appropriations cycle, we submit the following requests for your consideration:

America's Water Infrastructure Act (AWIA) of 2018 Provisions

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Account: State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)

We request following amounts for FY 2021 for three programs authorized in AWIA:

- \$4 million for SEC. 2005 – Drinking Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Program;
- \$5 million for SEC. 2007 – Innovative Water Technology Grant Program
- \$61 million for SEC. 4106 – Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grants

These three programs were created in the America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. In FY 2020, Congress provided first-time funding for all three: \$3 million for Sec. 2005, \$1 million for Sec. 2007, and \$28 million for Sec. 4106. We thank you for these important investments, and urge you to build upon them in FY 2021.

These programs will provide tools and resources to support innovation in addressing unique local challenges in water supply and water quality, including practices involving the use of recycled wastewater effluent, captured stormwater, and other alternative water sources in all states.

Clean Water State Revolving Fund

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Account: State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)

The successful Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program is the primary source of federal financing assistance for clean water infrastructure. The CWSRF is an important tool used across all 50 states and in communities of all sizes to help communities make investments more affordably. Our nation's water infrastructure faces significant infrastructure investment challenges with utilities challenged to maintain and upgrade aging infrastructure, comply with federal obligations, protect public health and serve as environmental stewards in their community – all while maintaining affordable rates for critical services. A significant increase in funding for the CWSRF would help communities meet these growing needs. We therefore request \$3.4 billion in FY 2021.

Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Account: Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Fund

The Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program accelerates investment in our nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental loans for regionally and nationally significant projects. EPA estimates that a \$50 million Water Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act (WIFIA) appropriation can be leveraged into \$5 billion in low-interest federal loans and \$10 billion in new water infrastructure projects. A small increase in appropriated dollars for this program can go a very long way toward advancing water reuse and recycling across the country. Already, WIFIA has made major investments in innovative water recycling projects, and we expect to see this trend continue into the future. We therefore request \$65 million in FY 2021 for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Program.

Drinking Water State Revolving Fund

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Account: State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG)

Following the 1996 Amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, Congress demonstrated its commitment to safe drinking water and economic growth by investing more than \$19 billion into 13,800 drinking water improvement projects nationwide. These investments have been matched nearly 2:1 with non-federal dollars. Despite the large investment, the need for drinking water infrastructure improvements far exceeds available dollars. An increase in FY 2021 would support the development and modernization of critical infrastructure to meet America's future drinking water needs. We therefore request \$2.32 billion in FY 2021 for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

National Priorities Water Research Grant Program

Agency: U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Account: Science & Technology

The water sector in the United States is vital for supporting healthy families and thriving communities. Today, the water sector is facing unprecedented challenges, including extreme drought, catastrophic flooding, failing infrastructure, emerging contaminants, and dramatic changes in population. Water research will play a critical role in developing cost-effective solutions to these challenges to ensure thriving, resilient communities, create jobs, and support healthy families. In recent years, Congress has appropriated hundreds of millions of dollars for EPA research, but less than 15 percent of EPA's Science and Technology Account funding is dedicated to water related research. Less than 1 percent of these funds supports applied research for water utilities. We therefore request an increase in funding to \$20 million for the National Priorities Water Research grant program in order to better reflect the urgent research needs of the water sector.