The nation’s water infrastructure is in dire need of repair or replacement. U.S. drinking water and wastewater infrastructure is aging and deteriorating. At the same time, the number of water users is increasing. This increased use is putting strain on local systems already at or near their breaking point, posing serious concerns for the health, safety, and economic stability of communities across the country. Significant federal investment distributed to the local level is needed to improve the functionality and resilience of our water systems.

The State of U.S. Water Infrastructure

According to the 2017 American Society of Civil Engineers Infrastructure Report Card, more than 56 million new users are expected to be connected to centralized water treatment systems over the next two decades. This will further exacerbate the daily strains on aging systems already encountering significant stress from chronic water main breaks, sewage overflows, and flooding. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that $472.6 billion is needed over the next 20 years for maintenance and improvements to drinking water infrastructure and $271 billion is needed for wastewater infrastructure over the next 25 years.

Congress should support additional investments to maintain safe drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

The Government Accountability Office found that state and local governments spent approximately $104.6 billion on drinking water and wastewater infrastructure projects in 2014 (the last year data is available). During this same period, the federal government spent only $4.4 billion on drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Local and state leaders are already investing significantly to address national drinking water and wastewater issues, but additional federal funding is needed.
Congress should support local efforts to maintain and improve the nation’s drinking water and wastewater in the following ways:

**Increase funding to local governments for water infrastructure planning and projects.** Increase federal funding for state and local water quality programs including the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), and stormwater assistance programs.

**Improve the resiliency of America’s water infrastructure systems.** Increase drinking water and wastewater resilience through research, planning, and programs that ensure that water infrastructure can withstand extreme weather events and other disasters. Direct new resources to support local government efforts to evaluate and undertake capital investments to improve water system resiliency.

**Support local government input.** Ensure that regional councils and local governments are given the opportunity to provide timely and meaningful input on legislation and management decisions impacting local water quality. Fund the new U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Office of the Municipal Ombudsman and implement integrated planning legislation that allows local governments to efficiently prioritize capital improvements.

**Provide regulatory flexibility and funding to localities adhering to federal standards.** Support national standards that ensure the safety of America’s water systems while providing the flexibility that local governments need to retain affordability for end users. Increase funding opportunities for necessary capital improvements, improve permitting processes, and support programs that protect water resources.

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