



February 25, 2019

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairwoman
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
S-128, U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: FY 2019 Funding for National Priorities Water Research

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski, Chairwoman McCollum, Senator Udall and Congressman Joyce:

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 that ensure thriving, resilient communities, create jobs, and support healthy families.

The need is great. While a recent survey estimated approximately \$300 million in unfunded water research projects, this represents only a small fraction of the entire water sector’s research, development and demonstration needs. In the past two years, Congress has appropriated between \$600 - \$700 million for EPA research, but less than 15% of EPA’s Science and Technology Account funding is dedicated to water-related research. Less than 1% of these funds supports applied research for water utilities.

In 2019 Congress took an important step forward by appropriating \$5 million to support the EPA’s National Priorities Water Research program. This is the only source of federal funds that supports collaborative,

extramural, cost-shared partnerships with non-profit, water-sector research institutions that address the water sector's research needs. In addition, Congress authorized a \$10 million federal investment in the development, deployment and demonstration of water technologies through the Innovative Water Technologies grant program through the America's Water Infrastructure Act.

Today, we urge Congress to provide additional funding to support these two programs in fiscal year 2020. Specifically, we ask:

- To increase funding for the National Priorities Water Research grant program to \$20 million to reflect urgent research needs of the water sector.
- To fully fund the Innovative Water Technologies grant program at \$10 million, as authorized, for fiscal year 2020.

Robust funding for these competitive grant programs will support transformative research approaches and technology deployment that will enable the water sector to respond to current and future challenges and protect American families.

The Committee's continued support of the National Priorities Water Research Grant program has provided direct benefit to water sector utilities through increased knowledge, tools and models that can improve public health outcomes and lower costs for municipalities. The Innovative Water Technology grant program will add to this by helping the sector to develop, deploy and demonstrate those transformative technologies to inform smart water infrastructure investment as utilities strive to provide safe and reliable water, wastewater and stormwater systems. Extramural research focuses on the most pressing national needs for a sector that is going through marked transformation.

Congress does not need to do this alone. Our sector is taking the lead by directly funding research and development through its non-profit research foundation, supporting new technology acceleration platforms such as the Leaders Innovation Forum for Technology (LIFT) and Utility of the Future, and by pursuing new funding mechanisms like green bonds or public-private partnerships. Notwithstanding these efforts, significant needs continue to go unmet.

We ask Congress, through increased research funding and programmatic support, to bolster our efforts to develop innovative technologies and transformative solutions to our national water challenges. We urge you to continue to support and grow the National Priorities Water Research grant program and to fully fund the Innovative Water Technologies grant program. Funding for these two grant programs is vital to our efforts. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Peter Grevatt, Ph.D.
Chief Executive Officer
The Water Research Foundation



Eileen J. O'Neill, Ph.D.
Executive Director
Water Environment Federation



David LaFrance
Chief Executive Officer
American Water Works Association



Adam Krantz
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