

May 4, 2021

The Honorable Peter DeFazio
Chair, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Grace Napolitano
Chair, Subcommittee on Water Resources
and Environment
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Brian Fitzpatrick
Member, Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chair DeFazio, Chair Napolitano, and Congressman Fitzpatrick:

The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) expresses our support for H.R. 1915, the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021, a bipartisan bill that reinvigorates the federal government's commitment to wastewater infrastructure by authorizing \$50 billion in wastewater and stormwater infrastructure funding over five years. This includes reauthorizing the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) for \$40 billion over five years, funding non-point and point source water pollution control programs and grants that address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), and creating pilot programs to promote stormwater best management practices and resiliency.

Well-maintained public drinking water and wastewater infrastructure systems are critical for public health, strong businesses, and clean waters and aquifers, yet ASCE's *2021 Infrastructure Report Card* gave the nation's wastewater infrastructure a grade of "D+." Stormwater was evaluated for the first time in the *2021 Report Card* and debuted at a dismal "D."

More than 16,000 publicly owned wastewater treatment systems serve the majority of wastewater needs in the nation and are functioning, on average, at 81% of their design capacity, while 15% have reached or exceeded it. Additionally, there is a growing annual funding gap of \$8 billion just to comply with current stormwater regulations. America's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure provide a critical service, and it is crucial that sustained, significant, and strategic investments from all levels of government and the private sector are made to meet growing demand.

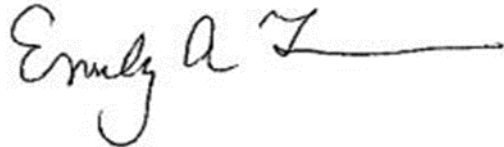
As cities continue to experience population growth and as rural households switch from septic systems to public sewers, pressure on existing centralized systems will require billions of dollars in investment to meet federal regulatory requirements. In 2019, there was an \$81 billion water infrastructure funding gap; if this chronic underinvestment continues, our nation's drinking water and wastewater sectors face a \$434 billion funding gap by 2029.

Cities and towns across the country report that complying with federal wastewater and stormwater regulations represent some of their costliest capital infrastructure projects. Fortunately, the CWSRF – when robustly funded – has the ability to help close the funding gap needed for wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. Since the CWSRF's inception in 1987, the federal government has loaned nearly \$50 billion to all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico, which has allowed states to

leverage over \$140 billion in wastewater infrastructure system improvements – all through low-interest financing. Every dollar provided by the federal government is matched at 20 percent by the state.

As advocates of strategic, sustained investment in our nation’s infrastructure, ASCE thanks you for your leadership and introduction of this bipartisan bill. The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2021 is an important step in helping our nation achieve an infrastructure system fit and resilient for the 21st century. ASCE welcomes the opportunity to work with you on this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily A. Feenstra". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Emily Feenstra
Managing Director, Government Relations & Infrastructure Initiatives