



CREATING GOOD JOBS, A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT, AND A FAIR AND THRIVING ECONOMY

September 26, 2017

The Honorable Garret Graves
U.S. House of Representatives
430 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Grace F. Napolitano
U.S. House of Representatives
1610 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Building a 21st Century Infrastructure for America: Water Stakeholders' Perspectives Hearing in the Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

Dear Chairman Graves and Ranking Member Napolitano:

As a coalition of the nation's largest labor unions and environmental groups, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, we write to express support for your committee's efforts to address the urgent needs of America's water infrastructure. A federal commitment to reinvest in our failing water infrastructure can ensure the delivery of clean water to our communities while creating thousands of quality, family-sustaining jobs.

Our nation's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure is vital to the protection, treatment, and distribution of clean water resources. Yet, strain from population growth, lack of investment, and emerging threats from climate change have increased the burden on our current water infrastructure system. In fact, the American Society for Civil Engineers (ASCE) most recently gave our nation's wastewater infrastructure a grade of "D+". Advancing our nation's water infrastructure investment will help communities adequately treat storm and wastewater and adapt to the effects of climate change while creating numerous family-sustaining jobs. Our recently released report, entitled *Making the Grade 2.0: Investing in America's Infrastructure to Create Quality Jobs and Protect the Environment*, found that **getting our drinking and clean water systems to a "B" grade over the next 10 years could create about 654,000 job-years across the U.S. economy.**

These jobs will be created through the replacement and upgrade of pipelines, treatment plants, storage tanks, and the installation of green infrastructure projects. Investments in water recapture, reuse, and transport will save water and energy, reduce the carbon dioxide emissions from pumping water, and create jobs improving our nation's water infrastructure. Gray water systems, water reuse-recycling, hot-water circulating systems, and rainwater catchment systems help conserve both water and the energy used to treat and transport it, and create jobs in the industries supplying these technologies.

Green infrastructure approaches can help address the estimated 10 trillion gallons a year of untreated stormwater run off from roofs, roads, parking lots, and other paved surfaces, which often

pass through sewage systems before spilling into rivers and streams that serve as drinking water supplies and sites for aquatic recreation. This untreated runoff increases health risks, degrades ecosystems, and damages tourist economies. Green infrastructure helps stop runoff pollution by capturing rainwater and storing it, or letting it filter back into the ground, replenishing vegetation and groundwater supplies, and helping to reduce or prevent combined sewer overflows. These solutions also stimulate local investment and support American jobs.

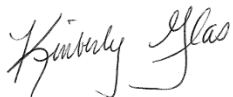
Skilled workers are needed to ensure the installation and construction of green infrastructure projects are effective and maintain water quality standards. In addition, green infrastructure, along with traditional water systems, requires routine maintenance and upkeep to function optimally, thus sustaining job creation and employment opportunities. Cost-effective green infrastructure practices, combined with investment in conventional stormwater mitigation efforts have the potential to provide wide-ranging benefits to communities nationwide.

Federally funded infrastructure programs, such as the state revolving funds (SRFs) support millions of jobs. Since the Clean Water State Revolving Fund was established in 1988, it has leveraged billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment, creating millions of jobs throughout the U.S. economy. We must increase investment for state revolving funds, and guarantee they contain provisions to ensure that domestically produced iron, steel and manufactured goods are used to build American infrastructure. By incorporating Buy America provisions in federal infrastructure investment, we can ensure that water infrastructure projects have an even larger benefit on the U.S. economy since those investments will boost American businesses throughout the economy and supply chain.

We must also ensure that these green jobs are good jobs by requiring prevailing wage provisions and benefits as outlined under the Davis-Bacon Act. The Davis-Bacon Act ensures that local laborers hired under federal contracts are paid prevailing wages and fringe benefits on federally-assisted construction projects. Our nation's construction workers are at the vanguard of building the vital infrastructure necessary to support a growing green economy and healthy, sustainable communities.

Water is critical for a healthy community, prosperous economy, and clean environment. We thank you for considering this important topic and urge you take our recommendations into consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kimberly Glas".

Kim Glas
Executive Director
BlueGreen Alliance

BlueGreen Alliance National Infrastructure Recommendations

Investments to rebuild our infrastructure must support a prosperous, clean economy and should be implemented with smart planning and sound standards that ensure American communities and workers—as well as the environment and economy—see the full benefits of these investments now and for decades to come. The following recommendations can ensure we maximize the benefits of our infrastructure investments for communities, the environment, jobs, wages, benefits, and retirement security:

- Ensure all projects built with public resources are subject to “Buy America” standards that maximize the return to taxpayers and the American economy by utilizing American-made building products, parts, and components;
- Enforce Davis-Bacon prevailing wage provisions that ensure workers are paid prevailing wages on public works projects;
- Utilize project labor agreements (PLAs), a collective bargaining tool establishing terms and conditions for employment on the projects, as well as community benefits agreements;
- Utilize public interest procurement provisions and practices, such as those that prioritize improving training, working conditions, and community benefits, and those that prioritize use of the most efficient, cleanest materials and products with the lowest carbon and toxicity footprints. These measures help ensure that public investments strengthen domestic manufacturing;
- Instill forward-looking planning that meets environmental standards and builds resilient infrastructure systems; and
- Enhance workforce training and development programs to expand the number of skilled workers in new and existing industries and increase economic opportunities for communities and local workers, especially for people of color and low-income communities.
- Prioritize public funding and financing for infrastructure investment to ensure projects are completed in a timely way and built with products and materials that are of the highest quality and are produced with the lowest carbon intensity. While it is appropriate to consider innovative financing tools to leverage federal funds, like infrastructure banks, grant and loan programs, and public-private partnerships, all financing methods should be held to strong public interest standards.