



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

March 4, 2019

Representative Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman, Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2165 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Representative Sam Graves
Ranking Member, Transportation &
Infrastructure Committee
U.S. House of Representatives
2164 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman DeFazio and Ranking Member Graves,

As a coalition of the nation's largest labor unions and environmental groups, collectively representing millions of members and supporters, we write to express the BlueGreen Alliance's support for the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2019.

Our nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure is vital to the protection, treatment, and distribution of clean water resources. But age, strain from population growth, lack of investment, and emerging climate change-related threats have increased the burden on our water infrastructure system. The U.S.'s wastewater and drinking water infrastructure received grades of "D+" and "D" in the American Society of Civil Engineer (ASCE)'s 2017 Report Card, respectively.

American cities rely on pipes that are, on average, a century old. These pipes leak 6 billion gallons of clean drinking water daily, which wastes energy and water and disrupts businesses and communities. In addition, there are approximately 240,000 water main breaks each year in the United States—a rate of about 700 breaks per day. All of that waste adds up to \$2.6 billion dollars per year our country loses to ineffective water distribution systems—that is enough water for 68 million Americans.

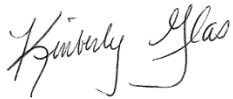
Significant investments and upgrades in appropriate water infrastructure are necessary in order for communities to adapt to the effects of climate change, maintain access to safe drinking water, and adequately treat storm and wastewater. Advancing our nation's water infrastructure will also create numerous family-sustaining jobs through the replacement and upgrade of pipelines, treatment plants, storage tanks, and the installation of green infrastructure projects.

The bipartisan Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act helps address our failing water infrastructure—and ensures quality jobs are created—by infusing \$23.5 billion in direct investments to address our wastewater infrastructure and water quality needs. This includes more than doubling funding levels for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (Clean Water SRF) program, which has a proven track record of successfully providing funding to states and communities for wastewater infrastructure construction.

Since 1987, funding through the Clean Water SRF has provided more than \$43 billion in federal capitalization assistance to states, which has in turn leveraged over \$120 billion in direct assistance to our communities. The funding provides financial assistance for the construction of wastewater facilities, nonpoint source pollution control, and estuary protection projects. These investments help local water systems come into and stay in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act, and are key to improving our water infrastructure and providing localities with clean sources of drinking water.

The Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act of 2019 ensures Congress renews its commitment to these water infrastructure issues by reauthorizing the fund while also providing critical funding to two supplemental federal clean water grant programs. Importantly, the bill will also create thousands of new domestic jobs in related sectors. On behalf of BlueGreen Alliance's members and supporters, we strongly support the swift passage of the Water Quality Protection and Job Creation Act.

Sincerely,

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

Kim Glas
Executive Director
BlueGreen Alliance