



September 12, 2018

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Paul Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Ryan, Minority Leader Schumer and Minority Leader Pelosi,

On behalf of the nation's mayors, cities, and counties, we applaud the bipartisan efforts of the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives in moving forward on America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 (WRDA 2018/S. 3021) to comprehensively address our nation's water resources infrastructure. This bill is a positive step to ensure Congress continues the two-year authorization cycle for the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA). We urge Members of Congress to support this bill and send a final version to the President as soon as possible.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Army Corps) projects authorized in WRDA drive investment in navigation, flood protection and ecosystem restoration in communities. Local governments own and manage much of this infrastructure, including ports and harbors, inland waterways, levees, and dams that protect public health and safety and our natural resources. WRDA is critical to helping our communities build, maintain, and improve this critical infrastructure, while growing our national and local economies.

We thank committee leaders for including provisions in WRDA 2018 to require the Army Corps to engage with stakeholders, including states and local governments, on future and pending WRDA projects, annual budgeting and guidance documents. This is an important first step to strengthening the federal-state-local government consultation and collaboration process and will improve its transparency and efficiency. It is essential that local elected officials are included in the engagement process due to the unique perspective that we provide on the development and financing of infrastructure projects. We also support provisions that will allow projects to move forward with non-federal partners, so together we can reduce the backlog of authorized, but not funded, projects.

We are also pleased to see that the bill includes provisions that will help communities upgrade our nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and improve stormwater management. As you know, despite the fact that local governments fund 95 to 98 percent of all water and wastewater infrastructure investment, the needs in our communities continue to grow. We support provisions to provide financial resources and technical assistance to address lead contamination, increase resilience to natural hazards, provide workforce development and training within the water sector, reduce sewer overflows and manage stormwater, and reauthorize the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.


While two important provisions that we have advocated for—full allocation of Harbor Maintenance Trust Fund dollars and codifying U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Integrated Planning and Financial Capability Frameworks—are not addressed in WRDA 2018, we look forward to working with Congress to address them in the future.

Thank you again for working in a bipartisan and bicameral fashion to pass America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018 in a timely manner. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the safety and modernization of our nation's water infrastructure needs remain a top national priority. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact our staff: Judy Sheahan (USCM) at 202-861-6775 or jsheahan@usmayors.org; Carolyn Berndt (NLC) at 202-626-3101 or Berndt@nlc.org; or Julie Ufner (NACo) at 202-942-4269 or jufner@naco.org.

Sincerely,



Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
The U.S. Conference of Mayors



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director
National League of Cities



Matthew D. Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties

cc: Members of the U.S. Senate and U.S. House of Representatives