



101 Constitution Avenue, NW, Suite 375 East  
Washington, DC 20001-2179  
(800) 548.ASCE(2723) toll free (202) 789.7850  
(202) 789.7859 fax ■ www.ASCE.org

May 8, 2018

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

Dear Chairman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

As you draft Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations for the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, we urge you to robustly fund those agencies and programs that protect public health, the environment, and the economy. Investment in these programs ensures that communities have access to clean and safe water while promoting economic growth through hazardous waste site redevelopment and the public parks infrastructure.

### **Drinking Water and Wastewater**

Well-maintained public drinking water and wastewater infrastructure systems are critical for public health, and a strong robust economy. ASCE's *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave the nation's drinking water infrastructure a grade of "D," and the nation's wastewater infrastructure did not fare much better with a grade of "D+." We urge the Committee to renew the federal government's commitment to drinking water and wastewater infrastructure by:

- **reinvigorating the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) programs by tripling the amount of annual appropriations in FY19; and**
- **fully funding the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program at \$50 million in FY19.**

Despite increased efficiency methods and sustainable practices, there is a growing gap between the capital needed to maintain drinking water and wastewater infrastructure and the actual investments made. By 2025, the investment gap for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure systems is estimated at \$105 billion. According to the American Water Works Association, \$1 trillion will be needed to maintain and expand drinking water service demands during the next 25 years.

The CWSRF and the DWSRF play a vital role in providing states and localities with a critical source of funding for water infrastructure projects through low-interest loans since their original authorizations in 1987 and 1996, respectively.

In 2014, Congress authorized WIFIA, a new mechanism to primarily fund large water infrastructure projects over \$20 million. This program offers the sponsors of large projects a new tool to leverage limited federal resources, stimulate additional investment in our nation's infrastructure, and encourage

greater private sector participation in meeting the nation’s clean water needs. The EPA estimates that a \$20 million annual level of appropriations will result in approximately \$1 billion in loans supporting approximately \$2 billion in drinking water and wastewater infrastructure investments. Last month, the EPA issued its first WIFA loan to King County, Washington, and additional loans to other wastewater and drinking water recipients are on the way.

### **Public Lands**

Public parks and public lands are critical drivers of our nation’s economy, as well as a source of water for the 180 million people in over 68,000 communities who receive their drinking water from national forests and grasslands that capture and filter it. In fact, the Outdoor Industry Association’s *2017 Outdoor Recreation Economy* report found that the outdoor recreation economy, which relies heavily on public parks and lands, directly supports 7.6 million American jobs and generates \$125 billion in federal, state, and local tax revenue. Although public parks and lands enjoy broad support, chronic underfunding of our parks infrastructure continues to plague the system, threatening both safety of these infrastructure systems and the ability to meet the demand of a growing population.

- **We urge the Committee to appropriate \$1 billion in FY19 to address National Park Service’s (NPS) growing deferred maintenance backlog.**

ASCE’s *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave the nation’s public parks a grade of “D+.” Unfortunately, the NPS now has a deferred maintenance backlog of nearly \$12 billion, which includes \$6 billion for roads, bridges, tunnels, and parking lots and \$6 billion for non-transportation related projects such as eroding trails, visitor facilities, and water and electrical systems. The NPS manages more than 75,000 constructed assets, and over 41,000 of them – more than half – are in need of repair.

### **Brownfields**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) Brownfields program plays a critical role in the overall infrastructure that manages hazardous waste. This program improves the condition of the nation’s infrastructure, can increase residential property values, and provides environmental and economic benefits that positively impact rural, suburban, and urban communities.

- **We urge the Committee to fund the Brownfields program at \$250 million in FY19.**

ASCE’s *2017 Infrastructure Report Card* gave our nation’s hazardous waste a grade of “D+.” Although more than half of the nation’s population lives within three miles of a hazardous site, only about 30% of grant proposals submitted to the EPA are funded. Current funding levels are less than what is needed to optimize the benefits of this successful program; increased funding would leverage more dollars and stimulate job growth and economic benefit while improving the condition of the nation’s infrastructure.

In conclusion, ASCE believes our nation must prioritize the investment needs of infrastructure to ensure public safety, a strong economy, and the protection of our environmental resources. Strategic, robust, and sustained investments, through long-term, reliable federal funding, as well as through the utilization

of alternative financing mechanisms, must be made quickly if we hope to close the growing funding gap and restore America's world-class infrastructure. We thank you for your consideration of our funding requests and look forward to working with the Committee to fund these existing successful federal infrastructure programs.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kristina Swallow". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kristina" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Swallow".

Kristina L. Swallow, P.E., ENV SP, F. ASCE  
2018 ASCE President

cc: Senator Richard Shelby and Senator Patrick Leahy, Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Senate Committee on Appropriations