Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 07, 2011

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We applaud your continued commitment to investment in our nation's infrastructure and encourage you to include water-related projects in your efforts to renew infrastructure investment and promote job creation. In our view, increased Federal investment in water infrastructure is central to the economic and environmental health of the nation, and has a proven track record for job creation – with estimates that each $1 billion spent on water infrastructure creates approximately 27,800 jobs as well as upgrades our nation's critical water infrastructure.

We have been encouraged by your recent statements on the economic and societal benefits of infrastructure investment, especially the benefits of increased employment that directly and indirectly results from Federal investment in our roads, railways, airports, and water-related infrastructure. In our view, the long-term benefits of investment in infrastructure have repeatedly been documented not only in terms of increases in the nation's gross domestic product (GDP), but also in the creation and preservation of millions of well-paid jobs for contractors, construction workers, and suppliers connected to infrastructure construction and repair.

As recently highlighted in a November, 2010, report from the White House Council of Economic Advisors on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act), the $45.2 billion in core infrastructure investment provided by the Recovery Act raised the national GDP by 2.7 percent and increased employment by 2.7 to 3.7 million compared to what these figures otherwise would have been through the third quarter of 2010.

This track record of success was equally reflected in the Recovery Act's investment of $6 billion for the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) not only in terms of job creation, but also in the relative speed in which the beneficial impacts of Federal assistance were realized. According to a recent report from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Recovery Act investment in the SRFs resulted in "3,200 assistant agreements worth over $5.6 billion for clean water and drinking water projects that will continue to confer economic, environmental, and public health benefits for years to come." In many cases, according to EPA, "state programs increased the amount of money they normally award to projects through the SRFs by more than two-fold, and they did so in about half the time it normally takes."

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

This success was also echoed in a recent report from the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), which found that all 50 states were able to award their Recovery Act funds to water-related infrastructure projects under contract within one year of the Act's passage, and that, as of June 2011, states had drawn down almost 80 percent of the SRF funds provided under the Act, with few compliance or auditing concerns.

While we agree with you on the economic and societal benefits of investment in the nation's roads, railways, and airports, we believe that rebuilding and repairing the nation's network of water infrastructure provides many of the same benefits, including job creation, as well as the added, long-term benefits of protecting public health and improving the environment.

For example, Federal investment in wastewater infrastructure to date has approximately doubled the number of people served by sewage treatment plants, as well as the percentage of lakes, rivers, and streams currently assessed as safe for fishing, swimming, or as a source of drinking water. Similarly, Federal investment in drinking water infrastructure has allowed thousands of communities to improve the quality and reliability of their drinking water, increasing compliance with national drinking water standards and protecting public health.

Promoting renewed Federal investment in our nation's water-related infrastructure will help address the $300-500 billion water infrastructure funding gap highlighted by EPA, GAO, and other stakeholders, while creating well-paying jobs in communities across America. These jobs cannot be exported, and will benefit working families across a spectrum of fields, including contractors, construction workers, engineers, and raw material and equipment suppliers.

Mr. President, we strongly agree with your recent statement that "there is no better time to invest in infrastructure than right now." We stand ready to support your efforts to restore, maintain, and, where possible, to increase Federal investment in our nation's infrastructure networks, including its water-related infrastructure.

Sincerely,

Tim Bishop
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Nick J. Rahall II
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Henry A. Waxman
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Gene Green
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

Jimmy V. Costello

Tim Holden

Queen Jackson Lee

John Conyers

Bob Filner

Maria Dinkey

Corrine Brown

Carolyn B. Maloney

Dis Colyer

Steve Israel

Brian Higgins

Madeline J Bordallo

Tammy Baldwin

Adam Smith

Dana DeGette

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Carolyn McCarthy

Bill Pascrell Jr

Lynn Woolsey

Barbara Lee

Howard L. Berman

[illegible]

Lois Capps

Gene Moore

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Pete Stark

Edward J. Markey

C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger

John F. Tierney

Kathleen C. Hochul

Daniel Lipinski

Grace F. Napolitano

Earl Blumenauer

Mazie K. Hirono

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

John W Olver

[illegible]

Peter Welch

Jim Langevin

[illegible]

John Garamendi

Jackie Speier

Karen Bass

[illegible]

William R. Keating

John Lewis

Judy Chu

Donna F. Edwards