

# America's Water Infrastructure

Keeps the Economy Flowing, Keeps People Healthy

## We call on Congress to

- Double funding for the Drinking Water and Wastewater State Revolving Loan Funds
- Pass legislation to reauthorize and boost funding for the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act
- Increase funding for the National Priorities Water Research Grant program to \$20 million
- Strengthen protection of the nation's waters in the 2018 Farm Bill
- Increase funding for USDA's rural water/wastewater loan and grant program
- Increase funding for the Bureau of Reclamation's water recycling program to \$60 million

## For the economy's sake

Simply put, communities and cities cannot attract and keep business, industry or even population without adequate water resources and the technical, managerial and financial resources to manage water. Those resources are needed to treat drinking water and wastewater, manage stormwater and recycle water. Every \$1 invested in water or wastewater infrastructure increases long-term gross domestic product by \$6.35. Each job in water or wastewater construction or rehabilitation creates 3.68 more jobs in the nation.

Conversely, not reinvesting in our nation's water infrastructure would cost manufacturers and other businesses more than \$7.5 trillion in lost sales and \$4.1 trillion in lost GDP through 2040.

## For the public's and the environment's sake

The investment and hard work of previous generations have provided us with some of the safest drinking water in the world. The Centers for Disease Control have ranked the disinfection of drinking water as one of the 10 most important public health developments in history. Our wastewater and stormwater systems have improved the safety of our sources of drinking, agricultural and recreational waters exponentially. We haven't experienced the cholera or typhoid outbreaks that we did in the country's early days, or that other nations experience even now. However, to sustain this progress, we must reinvest in our aging water infrastructure. We must also prepare for emerging challenges, such as water scarcity. Studies show that the country must invest at least \$1 trillion each in drinking water and wastewater over the next 25 years if we are to maintain our current level of service.

## **Solutions**

Congress has provided certain financial tools to help communities reinvest or upgrade their water systems, such as the state revolving loan funds, the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act program and the Bureau of Reclamation's Title XVI Water Reuse Grant program. We deeply appreciate Congress' leadership in creating these financial tools, but those programs have yet to realize their full potential. We urge Congress to further invest in these programs, which is actually an investment in our communities. Our respective organizations can provide more detail on the programs that affect them in particular.

As the Trump Administration and Congress deliberate and assemble a national infrastructure strategy, we strongly urge them to make reinvestment in our water infrastructure a core component of that strategy. Investment in infrastructure should also be coupled with federally funded research by independent institutions to ensure that our nation's water, wastewater and stormwater utilities have the up-to-date information they need to respond to current and future challenges.

As you know, the Farm Bill is due for reauthorization in 2018. One title in that bill, the conservation title, has done much to help agricultural producers improve the quality of waters adjoining their operations. However, Congress can improve these programs by better targeting conservation programs to spur more water system-producer partnerships to improve protection of source waters and address nutrient and similar water quality issues. Water utilities and the communities they serve do prefer to work cooperatively with producers, as they can in projects supported by the Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

USDA also administers a Rural Utilities Service program that provides loans, grants and loan guarantees for rural water systems serving 10,000 or fewer people. There is a \$3 billion backlog in applications from rural communities across the nation for this USDA assistance. We therefore urge Congress to increase funding for the Rural Development Water and Wastewater Loan and Grant program to \$650 million for grants and \$2 billion for loans.