

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 26, 2010

The Honorable Herb Kohl
Chairman
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
330 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Sam Brownback
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Agriculture,
Rural Development, Food and Drug
Administration and Related Agencies
303 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Kohl and Ranking Member Brownback,

We are writing to thank you for your continued support in the Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill for the National Rural Water Association's Rural Water Circuit Riders and Grassroots Source Water Protection programs as well as for the Rural Utility Service Water and Wastewater Grant and Loan Program.

Over 90 percent of U.S. community water systems serve populations of fewer than 10,000 persons. Small communities have the greatest difficulty providing safe, sustainable and affordable public drinking water and wastewater services due to their limited economies of scale and technical expertise. The regulatory requirements placed on small communities continue to increase with the expansion of water regulations including arsenic, radon, disinfection byproducts, the ground water treatment rule, total maximum daily load regulations and stringent re-permitting of wastewater permits. This is in addition to the over 80 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules currently in effect.

The initiatives and their accomplishments are detailed in the National Rural Water Association's annual Report to Congress (www.ruralwater.org/report). These on-site assistance initiatives are available to all small rural communities throughout the country through the state rural water associations.

We urge the Subcommittee to include funding for these initiatives in the FY 2011 Agriculture, Rural Development, Food and Drug Administration and Related Agencies Appropriations Bill (all are included in the President's FY 2011 budget request):

- **\$15.49 million for Circuit Riders within the Rural Utility Service:** Circuit Riders provide the primary assistance small communities need to operate safe, sustainable, clean water systems and comply with EPA regulations. Circuit Riders are in the field every day helping systems with compliance, operations, maintenance, management, rates and helping promote local responsibility for the protection of water resources.
- **\$6.4 million for the Grassroots Source Water Protection within the Farm Services Agency:** This initiative utilizes local elected officials, landowners, agricultural producers

and other interested entities to develop locally directed, and often locally funded, source water/watershed protection plans. The initiative has become the catalyst for unifying intrastate agencies, federal agencies and local elected officials to prepare and carryout watershed protection programs. This increase will provide each state rural water association with one full-time source water technician.

- **\$650 million for Rural Water Infrastructure Grants and Loans:** A small water system's viability is directly related to its water supply and sanitation. To overcome their limited resources, rural communities have turned to USDA water grants and loans provided at reasonable rates and terms to construct water and wastewater infrastructure. Without this assistance many could not construct new systems, expand existing ones, or comply with mandates. The technical assistance portion of this account should be increased to \$23 million to increase the number of wastewater assistance technicians available to small communities.

We appreciate your support and your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Blanch R. Lincoln

Jim Cooper

John Barrasso

Richard Durbin

Muri Cantwell

Susan Collins

Mike Crapo

Jeff Flinn

Jon Lisk

Mark Fennell

Robert Menendez

Orin Vitter

Jim Johnson

Shirley

Mary Landrau

Mark Begich

Jeff Bond

John F. Kerry

Michael B. Enzi

Chris Dodd

Amy Klobuchar

Byron D. Dorgan

Von Udoe

Kent Conrad

Ron Wyden

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Nick Durkin

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Jack Reed

Mark R. Warner

Mike Johanns

Bob Anderson

Debbie Stabenow

Max Baucus

M. F. B. &