

**APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE**  
**Member Day Hearing**  
*U.S. Rep. Lori Trahan (MA-3)*

Good morning, Madam Chair and Madam Ranking Member. I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you about two of my highest priorities for the fiscal year 20-22 budget.

First, thanks to the leadership of this committee, considerable progress has been made over the last two years to restore the traditional federal role in assisting communities to meet their *Clean Water Act* obligations.

I am particularly grateful for the investments that this committee has made since fiscal 20-20 in the EPA's Sewer Overflow Control grants program.

These grants are used to prevent combined sewer overflows – or C-S-Os – a product of antiquated sewer systems commonly found in our older cities.

By design, these systems collect both stormwater *and* household wastewater for treatment. However, when the volume of effluent exceeds a combined sewer system's capacity – which happens routinely – outfalls empty the waste into nearby bodies of water.

Each time C-S-O events occur, we gamble with exposing our constituents to a toxic stew. A number of years ago the EPA reported on the health risks associated with allowing untreated sewage to enter our waterways unabated. As one might expect, the C-S-O's frequently included bacterial pathogens, such as E. coli, cholera, salmonella, and the bacteria that causes typhoid fever as well as several parasites and viruses in C-S-Os.

Too often, these public health risks fall on the shoulders of communities that have historically been victimized by environmental injustices-- people who have already endured the brutal consequences of generations of disinvestment and malignant neglect.

However, stopping C-S-O's can be extremely expensive. Indeed, according to the EPA's latest *Clean Watersheds Needs Survey*, \$50 billion is needed to correct C-S-Os nationwide.

And, unfortunately, there is no single solution to solve our C-S-O challenges. Each of the 800 or so communities with combined sewer systems is different. In some, full sewer separation or new public wastewater treatment works may be necessary. In others, green infrastructure solutions – such as rain gardens and green roofs – may be sufficient.

In the Third Congressional District of Massachusetts, the district I'm honored to represent, a combination of these approaches is underway to protect the Merrimack River.

Nevertheless, the common denominator in nearly every case is the need for additional federal resources – particularly in the form of grants.

That's why Representative LaHood and I have filed the *Stop Sewage Overflow Act* -- legislation to double the funding for the Sewer Overflow Control Grants program as well as reduce the cost-share burden for economically distressed communities. Elements of our proposal were included in the *Moving Forward Act* last year.

And we can be certain that, as the climate warms and storms increase in frequency and intensity, our C-S-O challenge will grow worse.

Please build upon the progress of the last two years and include the highest possible funding for the Sewer Overflow Control grants program.

Second, I would ask that the committee provide a funding boost to the Energy Department's Office of Fusion Energy Sciences, consistent with the *Energy Act of 2020*.

Recent breakthroughs in fusion research hold incredible promise for our transition to a clean energy economy – and it led the National Academy of Sciences to recommend, in 2019, that the United States foster the R&D necessary for a pilot fusion plant.

To that end, last year, Representative Lamb and I filed an amendment to the *Clean Energy Jobs and Innovation Act* to increase the federal investment in fusion R&D. Our amendment was ultimately incorporated into the *Energy Act of 2020*.

Among the most critical and cost-effective provisions is a D-O-E supported “milestone-based development program.” This section of the law authorizes federal aid to support a full-scale fusion system. But the aid is conditioned on applicants reaching technical milestones along the way.

Commonwealth Fusion Systems, a spinoff from M-I-T, has already begun planning for a proof-of-concept plant in the Third Congressional District. I'm hopeful that America's clean energy revolution will be borne within a few miles of the birthplaces of the American Revolution and our Industrial Revolution.

Whatever approach proves to be the most cost-effective and technically feasible, fusion could serve as the foundation for our zero-carbon energy economy of the future.

Our need for clean, emissions-free energy is a race against time – not only to prevent the worst effects of climate change, but also to ensure that the United States is the global leader in solving this challenge.

I ask that you include robust funding for the newly authorized fusion research and development program.

Thank you, and I yield back.