

**CMR Opening Statement (6/23/21)**  
**Energy and Commerce Committee Markup**  
**Drinking Water & PFAS Legislation**  
*As prepared for delivery*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and good morning to all of my colleagues. Some of the bills we are marking up today contain provisions I find appealing and could support on their own. Unfortunately, there is also a lot that I cannot support in these bills in their current form.

The first bill we are discussing today is H.R. 3291, the Assistance, Quality, and Affordability Act of 2021. I believe we must not lose the successes this Committee secured in America's Water Infrastructure Act of 2018. Three items, though, make this bill particularly hard to support.

First, it authorizes appropriations at levels 400 to 500 percent higher than the most recently appropriated amount. It also creates an expensive NEW program providing FREE privately-owned lead service line replacements to the wealthiest Americans.

Second, it strips existing legal requirements that balance costs and benefits and promote the affordability of safe drinking water, particularly in small communities.

Last, it prohibits the collection of any future water bills for 5 years by water utilities that accept billing arrearage payments. This will place undue economic strain on water utilities.

The second bill under discussion is H.R. 3293, which creates the first income support program ever at EPA. Two items concern me most about this bill.

First, poorer rural communities and privately held water systems are subjected to more burdensome hoops to obtain funding than any others, including urban ones.

Second, H.R. 3293 creates a permanent billing assistance program while simultaneously directing EPA to study whether a need exists. We should study it first before establishing this program.

Finally, there's the PFAS Action Act, H.R. 2467. PFAS are a class of 9,252 separate chemicals according to EPA's Master PFAS List. I have become familiar with two of the best-known PFAS: PFOA and PFOS; because they are in foam that's contaminated Fairchild Air Force Base in Airway Heights, Washington.

While I support solving PFAS problems, H.R. 2467 goes too far.

- It removes the lab coat from EPA scientists, to mandate those decisions.
- It forces EPA to quickly make thousands of regulatory determinations under its major laws.
- It removes the public from the regulatory process.
- And, it favors stringency over real safety.

Mr. Chairman, I recognize these bills are well-intended. Unfortunately, being well-meaning is not a shelter for poor outcomes. I yield back.