

March 16, 2017

The Honorable Paul Tonko
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Environment
Energy and Commerce Committee
2463 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Letter for the record for the Hearing: *Reinvestment and Rehabilitation of Our Nation's Safe Drinking Water Delivery systems*

Dear Ranking Member Tonko:

On behalf of American Rivers more than 200,000 members and supporters across the United States, I am writing to express our strong support for H.R. 1071, the AQUA Act of 2017 and for including the Act's language in the Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments legislation. Increased funding for our water systems will help to ensure safe drinking water for everyone. No one in the United States should be afraid to drink the water coming out of their faucet.

There is an increasingly urgent need for renewed investment in our communities' water infrastructure. This need is driven by the unfortunate reality that for many decades, funding to maintain water systems has fallen short of the cost of providing safe drinking water. The result is decaying or outdated infrastructure that cannot keep pace with community need. The AQUA Act will provide authorization for an increase in funding for the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund so that states can get the resources they need to provide communities with clean, potable water.

The AQUA Act also increases funding for the removal of lead pipes which pose a significant health threat, as demonstrated by the ongoing crisis in Flint, Michigan. There is no safe level of lead exposure and it is especially dangerous to children as it can impair children's brain development. While corrosion control can help to mitigate the risk of lead leaching into drinking water it should be viewed as a temporary fix and there should be continued effort to replace the lead pipes.

In addition to fixing our clean water crisis through much needed investment in our nation's crumbling water infrastructure, American Rivers believes that every river in the country should be safe as a drinking water source. Rivers and streams provide critical natural infrastructure. Thus, protection, restoration, and sustainable management of our watersheds need to be a priority. We believe that everyone should have access to safe drinking water in their homes and that starts at the source and continues through to our taps.

American Rivers appreciates the Energy and Commerce Committee's Subcommittee on the Environment for holding a hearing on how to better provide communities across the nation with safe drinking water. If you have any questions please reach out to Meghan Boian 202-243-7037 or mboian@americanrivers.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Meghan Boian". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Meghan M. Boian
Associate Director for Policy & Government Relations