

Opening Statement of the Honorable John Shimkus
Subcommittee on Environment
Mark-up on “H.R.____, Drinking Water System Improvement Act”
July 13, 2017

(As prepared for delivery)

Good Morning and welcome to today’s Subcommittee markup. Today we will be marking up a discussion draft of the Drinking Water System Improvement Act. When we began this congress, one of the things we committed to do was to use our authority to authorize programs under our jurisdiction. The last reauthorization for the Safe Drinking Water Act was 1996, so it is high time we revisit and up-date the provisions of this act.

Our subcommittee held an oversight hearing in March on reinvestment and rehabilitation of our nation’s safe drinking water delivery system. That hearing was the basis for the drafting of this legislation. On May 19, we had a legislative hearing on the text of our discussion draft.

Since that time, our staffs have been working together on ways to increase funding for drinking water revolving loan funds and public water system supervision grants, efforts to improve asset management by utilities, and potential partnership options that improve management of systems and the provision of safe drinking water. To be clear, our work has just begun. We want to work with our friends on the other side of the aisle to produce a legislative product we can all be proud of.

Since releasing the Discussion Draft in the mid-May, the following provisions have been added:

- We have authorized \$8 billion over 5 years for the drinking water revolving loan fund program. (DWSRF). This average of \$1.6 million per year is the same as level that passed the House in 2010 and many of our members voted for that.
- We have extended Buy American Iron and Steel provision – without making any changes to the way they operate.
- We have opened the eligible uses of Drinking Water State Revolving Fund funding to now cover associated preconstruction activities and replacing or

rehabilitating aging treatment, storage, or distribution facilities which our friends on the other side of the aisle included in their bill.

- We have added a strategic plan for devising an electronic system that allows water utilities to send their compliance data to States and States send it to EPA – another idea our democrat friends have supported.
- We have added best practices for the loan funds and review of emerging technologies to help future drinking water system needs.
- We have reauthorized funding for voluntary source water protection programs and changed the law to have drinking water systems promptly notified when their source water is fouled by an industrial spill.

There are many good provisions in this bill. We should not let the legislative process be held up because it doesn't go far enough or doesn't include certain provisions. We are ready to work in good faith and are glad that our colleagues agree. This is the type of good bipartisan work we like to do here on the energy and commerce committee.

Even after this markup, we should continue to work together and I commit to my colleagues to do just that.

I yield back.