



March 28, 2022

Representative Frank Pallone  
Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee  
2107 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Cathy McMorris Rodgers  
Ranking Member, House Energy and Commerce Committee  
1035 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Pallone and Ranking Member McMorris Rodgers,

On behalf of the Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP), I write in support of the House Energy and Commerce Committee's recent work to further develop and strengthen drinking water infrastructure in rural communities. RCAP is particularly encouraged by the funding for rural water infrastructure and technical assistance within the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). As a leading technical assistance provider, we commend the creation of several new resources and investments that drastically improve the accessibility of training opportunities and technical assistance for drinking and wastewater programs in rural areas.

Water challenges are abundant in rural communities. Many of the communities we serve struggle to combat the rising costs of utility maintenance and infrastructure repair. It is especially important to address these concerns in smaller rural communities (those serving a population of 500 or less), as they represent 72% of our nation's approximately 150,000 public water systems.

Strong investments in water infrastructure within BIL represent an incredible opportunity to improve and maintain rural access to clean, safe, affordable drinking water. The Clean Water, and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds both received an effective tripling in funding over the next 5 years, including provisions for additional subsidization for disadvantaged communities, and decreased non-federal cost matching requirements, which will allow many more small, rural systems to benefit from this federal funding. RCAP is also encouraged by the Environmental Protection Agency's dedication to ensuring BIL's investments reach the small, disadvantaged, and rural communities that have the greatest level of need, as evidenced by the agency's recent memo on equitable implementation of BIL funds.

Further, we commend BIL's authorization of the first federally-funded pilot program for low-income water customer assistance, and are hopeful for this key program to receive funding in subsequent legislation. We applaud your committee's tireless bipartisan work on this important issue.

As the nation works over the next five years to implement funds from the BIL, RCAP thanks the committee for its work and is excited to continue working with you as we address water infrastructure needs across rural America.

Thank you,

Keith Ashby  
Interim CEO, Rural Community Assistance Partnership