

**Opening Statement for Ranking Member David B. McKinley
Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on “Trusting the Tap: Upgrading America's Drinking
Water Infrastructure.”
March 9, 2022**

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. According to the report card prepared by the American society of civil engineers, states like Nevada and Oregon were ranked first and second for the quality of their infrastructure. So it may be understandable that they had reservations about funding the infrastructure bill. But what about Mississippi and West Virginia? Ranked dead last. Their drinking water alone was given a “D,” these states are desperate.

Nearly everyone in congress says America needs better infrastructure, but when they were given the chance to vote for it, it didn't pass unanimously. Mr. Chairman, I've been a Member of Congress for nearly 12 years, and this was the first opportunity we had to get a real infrastructure bill to the President's desk.

President Obama talked about it, but it never happened. President Trump wanted to, but Pelosi wouldn't let his bill come to the floor. And after months of partisan bickering, I appreciate the leaderships' decision to keep social spending — known as build back better — separate from the bill. It's now pure infrastructure, and according to Forbes, the social spending bill is dead in the senate.

So when I'm back in West Virginia, I hear great things from stakeholders everywhere I go about this bill. Like Marie Prezioso with the West Virginia Water Development Authority and Todd Grinstead with the West Virginia Rural Water Association. They talk about communities like Fairview, Aurora, Pawpaw, And Wyoming and McDowell counties.

Those communities are struggling Mr. Chairman, and according to the West Virginia DEP our state has nearly 2,500 miles of contaminated streams. So, this bipartisan infrastructure bill is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for these small and rural communities to get affordable and clean water. But this committee will need to conduct rigorous oversight

Democrats have a history of prioritizing climate change over drinking water and putting urban interests ahead of rural ones. For example, President Obama cut funding for the state revolving funds for rural areas by half. So, this committee must be vigilant to ensure that small and rural communities are not left out again. I look forward to today's discussion.

Thank you and I yield back