

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record

**Subcommittee on Environment and Climate Change
Hearing on
“Trusting the Tap: Upgrading America’s Drinking Water Infrastructure”
March 29, 2022**

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The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ)

1. In your testimony, you highlighted how the water infrastructure investments made by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will benefit the construction industry by increasing employment opportunities for workers across the United States. These investments are going to facilitate critical drinking water infrastructure upgrades, but not without the workforce to actually get the work done.
 - a. **What role should apprenticeships play in developing a strong, accessible workforce to carry out water infrastructure projects that will be funded by BIL?**

RESPONSE:

Apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships are key to ensuring that water infrastructure investment creates not just good jobs, but accessible, good union jobs. Workforce funding included in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) will support existing union training and apprenticeship programs. For example, the United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters (UA) has dozens of training centers across the country. One of these training centers, run by Plumbers Local 5 and located just outside Washington D.C., has been training apprentices since 1940. Another example is the Utility Workers Union (UWUA)’s “Power for America Training Trust Fund” which provides critical training that helps ensure workers and employers in high-hazard industries maintain safety and worker protection in the workplace. Well-trained workers are safer workers and, in turn, are better equipped to ensure communities receive the best possible service.

- b. **Considering a portion of the BIL funding will revolve and therefore be available after the 5 years, how will these apprenticeships help to build a sustainable workforce to support the water sector for years to come?**

RESPONSE:

The water infrastructure investments made in the BIL will increase jobs in the construction industry, which has a long history of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship utilization. For example, the plumbing, pipefitting, and steamfitting industry currently employs 324,500 workers and is expected to see job growth around 15.6% through 2026.ⁱ Similar job growth will occur in other water infrastructure jobs. For example, pipelayers will see a 17.2% increase above the current 33,810 jobs, and other related jobs will see an 18.6% increase.ⁱⁱ

BIL water infrastructure investments will also accelerate job growth in every sector of the economy. This means increased numbers of steelworkers, utility workers, painters, laborers, operating engineers, electricians, public sector employees, and other union workers to manufacture, maintain, upgrade, and operate these systems. We need steelworkers to manufacture the pipes, painters to apply the industrial coatings that protect water infrastructure from corrosion, plumbers and pipefitters to replace lead service lines, and utility workers to ensure that drinking water is clean and wastewater is treated and made safe for the public and the environment. We have to make sure these are not just good jobs, but *accessible* jobs. BIL funding will help support and grow pathways into good union jobs—often through apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships—in these and other sectors for workers of color and other segments of the population historically underrepresented in these jobs.

Challenges still remain in recruiting, training, and retaining workers in the water sector—one-third of the water sector workforce is eligible for retirement in the next decade.ⁱⁱⁱ Additionally, roughly 85% of water workers are male and two-thirds are white.^{iv} There is clearly a need for younger, more diverse workers. This is especially crucial if the communities most impacted by failing water infrastructure are to see the full benefits of the jobs created by BIL funding. The BIL addresses by directing EPA to establish an interagency working group and reauthorizing and expanding the Innovative Water Infrastructure Workforce Development Grant Program. Both of these actions are intended to address recruitment, training, and retention of the water sector workforce.

- c. **In developing that workforce and promoting American manufacturing, how important are BIL's Build America Buy America (BABA) provisions?**

RESPONSE:

The investments included in the BIL will be significant job creators not just at project sites across the nation, but—thanks to strong domestic procurement policy—will also support American manufacturing. Infrastructure projects in particular are massive undertakings requiring huge amounts of building materials

like iron, steel, and concrete. These are materials that have been manufactured in the United States for decades and longer, but—due in part to misguided trade policy and a lack of adequate industrial policy—these industries have taken a hit as global competition has grown. It is critical that the taxpayer dollars being used to fund the historic investments in these two bills are used in ways that support American manufacturing and workers and communities here at home. This can be accomplished through strong domestic procurement policies such as those embedded in the Drinking and Clean Water State Revolving Funds and found in EPA’s implementation guidance.^v The BIL also permanently extended Buy America for funding distributed from the Drinking Water SRF, making it equivalent with Clean Water SRF policy.

Buy America domestic procurement requirements have a long-standing history of maximizing the return on investment to taxpayers and our economy. Requiring domestic content in infrastructure projects boosts domestic workers and manufacturers, and creates broad economic growth while spurring domestic manufacturing. According to the Alliance for American Manufacturing, Buy America provisions lead to a 33% increase in manufacturing jobs per dollar of public spending.^{vi} A GAO report found that water projects subject to Buy America provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 were lower in cost than estimated.^{vii}

One example of how American manufacturing and workers directly benefit from Buy America can be found at McWane Ductile Pipe in Coshocton, Ohio. At this facility, members of United Steelworkers Local 7014 produce ductile iron pipe used in water infrastructure. Buy America helps keep this facility open and provides the foundation for more good union jobs in decades to come.

The BIL also includes a significant expansion and modernization of Buy America called “Build America, Buy America” (BABA). Buy America requirements already extended to public-works transportation and water-related infrastructure. BABA will expand the application of Buy America preferences to nearly all infrastructure programs and projects, and will ensure that Buy America is applied more consistently and with fewer waivers, which will not only create more opportunities for American workers to benefit from federal infrastructure investments, but will improve the efficiency with which these preferences are applied.

This expansion of Buy America is also an excellent step forward in our fight against climate change. A [recent report](#)^{viii} authored by Global Efficiency Intelligence compares major steel producing countries on the basis of carbon intensity and finds the United States to be among the cleanest steel producing nations. These requirements will bring an increased demand for domestically-produced infrastructure materials, which U.S. produces – or has the capacity to produce – in more efficient, less polluting ways than many of the countries we currently import such goods from. An expanded Buy America coupled with a new

federal Buy Clean Initiative^{ix} that prioritizes transparency, invests in innovation, and ties our public dollars to low-carbon materials holds the promise of transforming some of the most heavy-emitting sectors in our economy, allowing us to lead by example on climate action, environmental justice, the creation of good jobs, and strengthening our globally-competitive domestic manufacturing sectors.

ⁱ Bureau of Labor Statistics, “The employment outlook for occupations tasked with building America’s infrastructure,” 2018. Available online: https://www.bls.gov/opub/btm/volume-7/the-employment-outlook-for-occupations-tasked-with-building-americas-infrastructure.htm?view_full

ⁱⁱ Brookings, *Metropolitan Policy Program, Renewing the Water Workforce*, June 2018. Available online: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brookings-Metro-Renewing-the-Water-Workforce-June-2018.pdf>

ⁱⁱⁱ Environmental Protection Agency, Water Sector Workforce. Available online: <https://www.epa.gov/sustainable-water-infrastructure/water-sector-workforce>

^{iv} Brookings, *Metropolitan Policy Program, Renewing the Water Workforce*, June 2018. Available online: <https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Brookings-Metro-Renewing-the-Water-Workforce-June-2018.pdf>

^v Environmental Protection Agency, “Memorandum: Implementation of the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Provisions of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law,” March 2022. Available online: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2022-03/combined_srf-implementation-memo_final_03.2022.pdf

^{vi} Alliance for American Manufacturing, *How Infrastructure Investments Support the U.S. Economy: Employment, Productivity, and Growth*. January 2009. Available at http://s3-us-west-2.amazonaws.com/aamweb/uploads/research-pdf/Infrastructure_2009.pdf

^{vii} GAO, *Clean Water Projects Are Underway, but Procedures May Not Be in Place to Ensure Adequate Oversight*. May 2010. Available at: <https://www.gao.gov/assets/130/124764.pdf>

^{viii} Global Efficiency Intelligence, *Steel Climate Impact An International Benchmarking of Energy and CO2 Intensities*, April 2022. Available online: <https://www.globalefficiencyintel.com/steel-climate-impact-international-benchmarking-energy-co2-intensities>

^{ix} The White House, Executive Order on Catalyzing Clean Energy Industries and Jobs Through Federal Sustainability, December 8, 2021. Available online: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/12/08/executive-order-on-catalyzing-clean-energy-industries-and-jobs-through-federal-sustainability/>