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May 24, 2021

Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress  
1724 Longworth House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Honorable John Katko  
Member of Congress  
2428 Rayburn House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Blunt Rochester and Katko:

I am writing on behalf of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative's Mayors Commission on Water Equity to convey support for HR 3293, the Low-Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act of 2021, which you recently introduced and which will be considered by the House Energy and Commerce Committee tomorrow. We appreciate your leadership on the critical issue of water affordability and urge swift action on this legislation to meet the urgent needs facing our cities.

The Cities Initiative is a binational coalition of nearly 120 U.S. and Canadian mayors and local officials working to advance the protection and restoration of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River. We convened the Mayors Commission on Water Equity in December 2020 to develop a policy agenda to strengthen water equity for all residents, with specific focus on communities that face significant challenges in receiving clean, safe and affordable drinking water.

Ensuring water affordability is a key priority being addressed by the Commission and our policy agenda will call for the establishment of a permanent low-income household drinking water and wastewater customer assistance program and the annual appropriations needed to meet the needs of low-income customers and the utilities that serve them. Last month we submitted a suite of water equity funding priorities to Congress to include in upcoming water infrastructure legislation, including \$8 billion for this type of program.

Water is a cornerstone of public health and a strong economy. However, historical patterns that generated inequality in our region have fostered disparities in water services, with low-income and communities of color shouldering a disproportionate share of the burden. HR 3293 addresses an urgent need in our cities and is an important step forward in ensuring that every American has safe, reliable water and wastewater services.

We appreciate your leadership and ask that you convey our support to the members of the Energy and Commerce Committee. If you have questions, please contact the Cities Initiative's executive director, Jon Altenberg (847-347-6947, [jon.altenberg@glslcities.org](mailto:jon.altenberg@glslcities.org)).

Sincerely,

Mayor Billy McKinney  
Zion, Illinois  
Chair, Mayors Commission on Water Equity