

The Honorable Lisa Blunt Rochester
U.S. House of Representatives
1724 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

May 24th, 2021

The Honorable John Michael Katko
U.S. House of Representative
2428 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Congresswoman Blunt Rochester and Congressman Katko,

We are writing to support the Low Income Water Customer Assistance Programs Act of 2021 (H.R. 3293). Communities of color and low income communities will greatly benefit from the amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act and the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to establish programs to assist low-income households in maintaining access to drinking water and wastewater services, and other purposes. This legislation will help us join the ranks of nations that prioritize water security for all their people.

We look forward to working with the committee on the bill to ensure it serves all households who need it, including tribal, urban and rural communities.

While we are supportive of the goal of the bill and appreciate many of the provisions, we would like to share the following recommendations to ensure that the most vulnerable communities access the resources and benefits of the bill:

1. Ensure Tribal Nations are included and prioritized;
2. Ensure all utilities participate;
3. Ensure technical assistance is designed to meet the needs of utilities serving frontline and vulnerable communities; and
4. Put protections in place to ensure that water services are reconnected and keep flowing for all households.

As you know, this is a national challenge that deserves our full attention and action. Over the last year, millions of households around the country have accumulated a debt burden that will dampen recovery efforts and extend the economic challenges of this pandemic. Just as water has been an essential tool to fight this virus, water affordability assistance is an essential tool in our recovery. That is why we strongly support Congress acting to fund an ongoing federal water affordability assistance program that provides annual funding for assistance.

Sincerely,

*The Following Members of the **Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus**:*

Kalima Rose, **PolicyLink**; Co-Chair, Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus
Colette Pichon-Battle, **Gulf Coast Center for Law and Policy**; Co-Chair, Water Equity and Climate Resilience Caucus

Denise Fairchild, President and CEO, **Emerald Cities Collaborative**, Washington DC and nationwide

Ya-Sin Shabazz, **S.O. Alternatives**, Biloxi, MS, and Gulf Coast

Janene Yazzie, **Sixth World Solutions**, Navajo Nation & Hopi territory

Jonathan Nelson, **Community Water Center**, California and national rural community interests

Holly T. Bird and Seth Bernard, **Title Track, Great Lakes, Michigan**

Jessica Dandridge, **The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans**, Louisiana

Candace Avalos, **Verde, Portland**, OR and Oregon statewide water interests

Melissa Haeffner, **Portland State University**

Mariana Del Valle Prieto Cervantes, **GreenLatinos**, Monterey, California and Washington DC

Monica Lewis Patrick, **We the People of Detroit**, Detroit, Michigan

Benny Starr, **Creative Water Equity Artist**, Charleston, South Carolina

Kristy Meyer, **Freshwater Future**, Westerville, Ohio