



ASSOCIATION OF  
WATER AGENCIES



American Water Works  
Association



NACWA  
A Clear Commitment to America's Waters



October 19, 2009

The Honorable John Kerry  
Chairman  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Chairman  
Committee on Environment and Public Works  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Kerry and Chairman Boxer:

On behalf of the nation's drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater agencies, we are writing to express our support for your inclusion of the "Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships" program as Section 381 of the "Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act" (S. 1733). The nation's water systems will be among the first to feel the impacts of climate change, and your legislation responds with competitive matching funds to assist in the design, planning, construction, and implementation of climate change adaptation projects while also taking important steps to reduce the nation's greenhouse gas emissions.

As you are aware, climate change is expected to lead to a host of challenges for the nation's water, wastewater, and stormwater agencies. These include increased drought, more frequent heavy precipitation events, and rising sea levels – all of which will threaten water quality and quantity, as well as public health. The "Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships" program addresses these issues by establishing a competitive grant program through which the nation's water, wastewater, and

stormwater agencies will compete for funding to undertake projects to adapt their operations and infrastructure to these impacts. Eligible projects will include efforts to conserve water or increase the efficiency in its use, preserve or improve water quality, rebuild or relocate threatened infrastructure, protect source waters and ecosystems, or implement advanced treatment technologies such as water recycling and desalination. Additionally, water systems could use grant funds to increase their use of renewable energy or to conduct local-level analyses of future climate-related water resource challenges they will face.

We appreciate that S. 1733 seeks to address the root causes of climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, while also recognizing that water systems must prepare for unavoidable climate change impacts that are expected to occur before the full benefits of these emissions reductions are felt. To this end, the “Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships” program strengthens the “Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act” by highlighting water resources adaptation as a critical component of a comprehensive climate change strategy.

While we support the program as it currently appears in S. 1733, we would oppose giving special funding preference only to projects that are able to employ non-structural approaches, or otherwise subjecting individual projects funded through the “Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships” program to separate regulations designed to guide state natural resource adaptation planning. These limitations would fail to recognize the range of adaptation measures that different utilities will need to employ in the coming decades, and would undermine the program’s ability to serve as a flexible source of climate adaptation funding for America’s water utilities.

We urge you to approve the “Water System Mitigation and Adaptation Partnerships” program this year as part of comprehensive climate change legislation. Thank you again for your leadership on this issue, and we look forward to continuing to work with you to implement and fund this important program.

Sincerely,

American Public Works Association  
American Water Works Association  
Association of California Water Agencies  
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies  
California Association of Sanitation Agencies  
National Association of Clean Water Agencies  
National Association of Flood & Stormwater Management Agencies  
Water Environment Federation  
Water Utility Climate Alliance  
WaterReuse Association  
Western Urban Water Coalition

cc: Environment and Public Works Committee