



## THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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May 20, 2011

The Honorable Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
U. S. House of Representatives  
2370 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Pascrell:

On behalf of the nation's Principal Cities represented by The United States Conference of Mayors (USCM), I am writing to express strong support for the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Investment Act of 2011 (H.R. 1802). The purpose of the legislation, as you so well state, is to modify the tax code to help local government finance much needed water and wastewater infrastructure and create jobs by encouraging private investment. The USCM has supported similar legislative proposals for over a decade, and we wish to express our thanks to you for continuing to fight for this important legislation. We agree with you that water and wastewater infrastructure is critical to the well being of public health and the nation's economy.

Our Member Cities, in 2005, identified their most pressing water resources management issue is the rehabilitation of an aging infrastructure. Subsequently, our research clearly indicates that local government efforts, in 2008, involved a \$100.2 billion expenditure on water and wastewater infrastructure and services. Yet, Congress and the Administration have contributed less than 2 percent to local government to support this effort. At the same time, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has promulgated several very costly unfunded federal mandates. The EPA has announced plans to develop more regulations that will become a cost-burden on the nation's cities. Our mayors are expected to rebuild their existing systems to maintain basic services, but also comply with new and costly regulatory programs. Local government allocation of financial resources to comply with federal water policy is rapidly and significantly diverting resources away from other equally important public needs. Congress set no cap on what cities are expected to spend to satisfy the water laws. The EPA has proven to be insensitive to the cost impacts of unfunded mandates. The nation's mayors recognize that this is both ill-advised and unsustainable.

Your legislation would provide some much-needed relief by encouraging local government to work with private capital to deliver a critical public service. A study we published in 2008 indicates that local government investment in water and wastewater infrastructure adds value to the national (and local) economy. That study suggests that every local dollar spent for this purpose generates \$9 in direct and indirect income. Every

local job created in water and sewer creates 3.68 jobs in the national economy to support that job. Your understanding of the relationship between infrastructure investment and job creation is a welcome sign of leadership in the right direction.

Thank you for sponsoring the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Investment Act of 2011. This minor modification of the tax code will provide an expansion of the tool-box of local government to provide safe, affordable and adequate water and wastewater services and infrastructure for the nation's principal cities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. If the Conference of Mayors can be of any service to your efforts, please contact Judy Sheahan or Rich Anderson of my staff at 202-293-7330.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Cochran". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Tom Cochran  
CEO and Executive Director  
The United States Conference of Mayors