



CLEAN WATER COUNCIL

Committed to America's Water Infrastructure

November 7, 2005

The Honorable Charles Taylor
Chairman,
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies
Room B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-6023

Dear Chairman Taylor,

The Clean Water Council (CWC) is a coalition of underground construction contractors, design professionals, manufacturers and suppliers, and other professionals committed to ensuring a high quality of life through sound environmental infrastructure. The CWC was therefore alarmed by a recent Administration proposal that included the rescission of \$166 million in unobligated balances in the FY06 Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF). If these cuts are enacted, there will be drastic consequences for water quality financing, public health and the economy. We strongly urge the House Interior and Environment Appropriations Subcommittee to ensure that there are no more cuts to the Clean Water SRF this year.

Cuts to the Clean Water SRF in the last two years have caused badly needed clean water infrastructure projects to be set aside in every state. Since FY04, the Clean Water SRF federal capitalization grants to the states have been cut by more than \$450 million. When you include the state 20% match, that figure grows to more than \$540 million in projects on the ground in the last two years. Furthermore, SRF project dollars multiply the money through the economy at a rate of 4 to 1 as the money revolves, creating jobs and revitalizing communities.

America's clean water infrastructure is already in a state of crisis. The EPA's *2000 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey* (CWNS) details \$181.2 billion in total current needs for clean water infrastructure nationwide. This figure represents a \$26.6 billion increase from the amount reported in the 1996 CWNS. The federal government must not divert resources from this growing problem. The EPA's *2003 Clean Water and Drinking Water Infrastructure Gap Analysis* found that there will be a \$271 billion gap between current spending and projected needs for clean water infrastructure if the federal investment remains level. Of course, federal investment has not remained level; it has sustained dramatic cuts.

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This proposed action requests Congress to revisit the already approved FY06 Interior and Environment appropriations bill (Public Law 109-54), which set funding for the SRF at \$900 million. Further cuts to the Clean Water SRF this year would undermine state Intended Use Plans that have projects already lined up or force some projects to be delayed.

The Clean Water Council understands the need to offset the costs of hurricane-relief efforts in the Gulf Coast. However, to target the successful SRF program would only provide a shortsighted solution that would only exacerbate America's clean water infrastructure crisis.

The Clean Water Council