



**American Water Works
Association**

Legislative Alert

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The Authoritative Resource on Safe WaterSM

To: AWWA Government Affairs Section contacts
From: Tommy Holmes, AWWA Legislative Director
Date: January 22, 2009
Re: **Calls, e-mails needed to senators on economic stimulus bill**

Action is picking up in the U.S. Senate on economic stimulus legislation that will likely include funding for drinking water infrastructure projects. Sen. Ben Cardin of Maryland last Friday sent a letter (attached) with 10 other signatures to Senate leadership seeking \$10 billion for drinking water infrastructure, \$20 billion for wastewater infrastructure and \$2 billion for “green” water infrastructure projects in the stimulus bill. That \$10 billion figure is the figure we have been communicating to Congress as the dollar amount in drinking water projects that could be started within 120 days of receiving funding. We have also been saying that drinking water infrastructure needs are equal to wastewater needs, as shown in studies by Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Conference of Mayors. The mechanism for distributing these funds will likely be the state revolving loan fund (SRF) program because it is an administrative mechanism already in place and this bill is not intended to create any major new programs. The Hill has made that point pretty strongly.

AWWA members need to call, e-mail or fax their own senators and ask them to support Sen. Cardin’s efforts to provide at least \$10 billion for drinking water infrastructure in the economic stimulus bill. Marylanders should thank Sen. Cardin for his leadership on this issue.

Be aware that the CBO has just issued a report that says most of the infrastructure projects (from roads and bridges to water) being sought for inclusion in this bill could not start in a timely manner. However, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi says that the CBO report does not reflect the administratively streamlining that the stimulus bill would include (for example, waiving the 20% match in capitalization by states normally required under the SRF). Therefore, it is also important that we provide illustrative examples of projects in your cities or regions that could indeed begin in 120 days after funding was provided. In this Congress and in this presidential administration, the word “earmarks” is a dirty word. What you need to do is present these “shovel ready” projects as examples to make the point that we have projects ready to go. It would be particularly beneficial if you could cite projects for which environmental permits have already been issued or for which there is no need for such permits.

A customizable template letter is attached.

Here are some talking points for a phone call:

- Please support Sen. Cardin's efforts to improve funding for drinking water projects in the economic stimulus bill.
- There are at least \$10 billion in projects that could begin within 120 days of funding becoming available.
- Studies by the CBO and the U.S. Conference of Mayors show infrastructure funding needs for drinking water and wastewater to be roughly equal.
- We've heard about the CBO report casting doubt about projects being able to start in a timely manner, but in our *[city, region, state]*, we have these projects that could start in 120 days if funding were available:_____.
- If you have any further questions on drinking water infrastructure or other drinking water issues, please do not hesitate to contact me.

And thanks to all of you for your calls and e-mails to the House on this issue!

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