



August 10, 2020

The Honorable Richard Burr
U.S. Senate
217 Russell Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable G. K. Butterfield
U.S. House of Representatives
2080 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Greg Murphy
U.S. House of Representatives
2333 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Virginia Fox
U.S. House of Representatives
2462 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Thom Tillis
U.S. Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable George Holding
U.S. House of Representatives
1110 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Price
U.S. House of Representatives
2108 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mark Walker
U.S. House of Representatives
1725 Longworth House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Rouzer
U.S. House of Representatives
2439 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Richard Hudson
U.S. House of Representatives
2112 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dan Bishop
U.S. House of Representatives
132 Cannon House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patrick McHenry
U.S. House of Representatives
2004 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alma Adams
U.S. House of Representatives
2436 Rayburn House Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Ted Budd
U.S. House of Representatives
118 Cannon House Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: Include Urgently Needed Funding for Water Infrastructure and Water Affordability Needs in Next Congressional Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Members of the North Carolina Congressional Delegation:

Our organizations represent national and local environmental nonprofits, North Carolina communities, water agencies, and other utility stakeholders in the state. In this time of crisis, we have come together to urge the North Carolina Congressional Delegation to include funding for urgent utility infrastructure and affordability needs as part of the next federal stimulus package or other pending Congressional actions.

We urge you to take the following steps as part of the next federal stimulus package or other pending utility (water, gas, and/or electricity) or infrastructure-related Congressional actions:

1. \$100 billion in new funding over five years for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds, with at least 20 percent of the new funding distributed to disadvantaged communities as additional subsidization (grants) rather than loans and eligibility for the new funding for all water systems, regardless of their organizational structure. These funds would provide vital direct support for water infrastructure, providing near-term jobs and local economic stimulus.
2. \$4 billion in immediate funding to the Environmental Protection Agency for grants to the states for a Low-Income Households Drinking Water and Wastewater Assistance/Affordability Program to help struggling households pay for essential water and wastewater service.
3. Emergency funding for affected water, gas, and electric systems, particularly serving disadvantaged or hard-hit communities, to help offset lost revenue, the costs associated with moratoriums on shutoffs, and the essential public health protections being put in place by such utilities.
4. Longer term federal funding in the form of 10-year interest-free loans to help utilities cover arrearages from lack of or delinquent payment by residential customers. This

funding should also include an additional 10% of the total loan package to help off-set the qualifying utility's administrative costs.

5. Shutoff moratorium/safe reconnection provision that ensures every American has access to water, gas, and electricity in their homes now and through the duration of the COVID-19 crisis and that allows for relief to vulnerable customers for a time afterwards to regain their financial footing while also providing needed fiscal support to utilities.

While not a comprehensive list of the actions our various organizations believe should be taken, these do represent meaningful, and we believe necessary, steps to meet both immediate and long-term drinking water, gas and electric needs of North Carolinians while also boosting the economy. These actions would help preserve access to vital utility services, including one of the most fundamental tools in our arsenal to address the spread of COVID-19 – washing your hands.

We urge the North Carolina Delegation to champion this issue in the coming weeks. We also encourage you to join your colleagues from the House Environmental Justice Taskforce and the Senate Environmental Justice Caucus as they push for stimulus provisions to support what North Carolinians and the nation need to ensure both immediate and long-term responses to this crisis and beyond.

We welcome the opportunity to brief you further on this urgent issue. For questions or to discuss further, please do not hesitate to reach out to Rory McIlmoil at Appalachian Voices (rory@appvoices.org) or Cori Bell at NRDC (cbell@nrdc.org).

Sincerely,

Al Ripley, Director, Consumer, Housing & Energy Project, North Carolina Justice Center

Bob Wagner & Julie Mayfield, Co-Directors, MountainTrue

Cori Bell, Attorney, Natural Resources Defense Council

Cynthia Satterfield, Acting Director, Sierra Club North Carolina

DeAndrea Newman Salvador, Executive Director, Renewable Energy Transition Initiative

Drew Ball, State Director, Environment North Carolina

Geoff Gisler, Senior Attorney, Southern Environmental Law Center

George Matthis, President, River Guardian Foundation

Grady McCallie, Policy Director, North Carolina Conservation Network

Hyong Yi, Public Works Administrator, Union County

Jim Warren, Executive Director, NC WARN

Joel Porter, Policy Manager, Clean Air Carolina

Karen Bearden, Coordinator, 350 Triangle

Rory McIlmoil, Senior Energy Analyst, Appalachian Voices

Shannon Binns, Founder & Executive Director, Sustain Charlotte

Tom Fox, Senior Policy Advisor, Center for Environmental Health