



July 16, 2021

Re: Funding American Jobs Plan Water Infrastructure Investments

Dear Senator,

On behalf of millions of Americans deeply concerned about the nation's crumbling water systems and workers poised to get to work in living wage jobs repairing and updating this aging infrastructure, we urge you to fully fund the substantial water infrastructure investments called for in the President's American Jobs Plan and Build Back Better agenda. This should include \$45 billion to replace all lead service lines, as well as substantial funding for other drinking water and wastewater infrastructure.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, our water infrastructure is falling apart and outdated. It receives the embarrassing grades of D+ for wastewater, D for stormwater, and C- for drinking water. This report card falls far short of what our great nation can and should earn. America must invest in fixing our water systems as the President has proposed.

Our obsolete and frequently-ineffective drinking water systems often serve water that violates health standards. Indeed, EPA data [show](#) that nearly 30 million Americans get their water from water systems that violate health-based standards. An estimated 9 million to 12 million homes, serving about 22 million or more Americans, are served by lead service lines that can cause health-threatening lead contamination. Similarly, many of our wastewater and stormwater systems are outdated and in bad shape. For example, EPA [reports](#) that 860 communities with a total population of about 40 million people are still using combined sewer systems that routinely discharge untreated raw sewage into our waterways when it rains. This poses health and environmental hazards.

When done by licensed and certified workers, repairing and updating these water systems will create good-paying jobs while protecting the public health. For example, in Newark, New Jersey when the city undertook a major program to replace all of its lead service lines, it employed and often trained many local residents, some of whom were previously unemployed, to carry out this job at a living wage with benefits. A \$45 billion investment to replace every known lead service line in the country could create tens of thousands of jobs annually. A Brookings study regarding water infrastructure employment found that "[w]orkers in these jobs earn

competitive wages and face lower educational barriers to entry. They develop extensive knowledge and transferable skills that cut across multiple disciplines.”

Therefore, we urge you to support full funding for the unprecedented water infrastructure investments contained in the American Jobs Plan and Build Back Better agenda, including \$45 billion in funding to replace all lead service lines in the nation. Thank you for your attention to this important matter.

Sincerely,

Natural Resources Defense Council

United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters