

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

March 16, 2021

The Honorable Tom Carper
Chairman
Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20150

The Honorable Shelly Moore Capito
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20150

Dear Chairman Carper and Ranking Member Capito:

As the committee begins to consider legislation to reauthorize Clean Water Act and Safe Drinking Water Act programs, I ask that you include language to ensure that state revolving funds, and other water and wastewater infrastructure programs at EPA, prioritize resources to ensure that rural, low income, and minority communities are not left behind without access to clean and safe drinking water as California enters a new drought.

According to the U.S. drought monitor, 91 percent of California is in drought as of March 11, 2021. As in other western states, prolonged drought has compounded the effects of the pandemic and exacerbated water equity issues, especially regarding access to safe drinking water. In California, 90 percent of contaminant violations occur in water systems serving less than 500 connections, and it is essential that additional federal resources be invested to help states, localities, and water utilities invest in resilience and sustainability programs in the face of drought and climate change.

In particular, I urge you to help address the \$10 billion backlog in California by including increased funding for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund to help water users conserve, manage, reclaim, or reuse storm water or wastewater, enhance water efficiency programs, and protect our water systems from natural hazards. I also urge you to ensure that SRF programs prioritize technical assistance and non-capital support for small systems to help address contaminant violations.

Investing in resilience and sustainability programs is essential to stretching our limited water resources, ensuring safe drinking water for at-risk communities, and adapting to climate change. I look forward to working with you on these critical issues.

Sincerely,



Alex Padilla
United States Senator

AP/ae