

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2019

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
2007 Rayburn House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce,
Ranking Member
Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman McCollum and Ranking Member Joyce:

We are writing to respectfully request that the Committee provide \$500 million for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Sewer Overflow and Stormwater Reuse Municipal Grant program ("Section 221").

As you know, the Section 221 grant program authorizes federal grant funding to States and municipalities for the planning, design, and construction of treatment works and other measures for combined sewer overflows, sanitary sewer overflows, or stormwater management. Combined sewer overflows are a product of combined sewer systems, which serve more than 800 communities across the nation. These systems are particularly common in the Northeast and Midwest, where they trigger harmful releases of raw sewage when precipitation exceeds manageable levels.

This is a particularly urgent challenge for communities along the Merrimack River, which supplies drinking water for nearly 600,000 people. Last year, 800 million gallons of sewage and untreated stormwater were released into the river, which runs more than 100 miles from central New Hampshire, through northeastern Massachusetts, and then out to sea. Combined sewer overflow discharges in Manchester and Lowell accounted for more than half of the volume.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund has been a useful tool to make improvements to the region's wastewater infrastructure. However, the scale of need to protect the Merrimack and the communities in its watershed requires a major investment of federal grant support. Indeed, according to the latest EPA Clean Water Needs Survey, nearly \$50 billion is needed. In our states alone, nearly \$1.6 billion is required.

The Section 221 grants authorized by Congress last year should be funded at the \$500 million level. This would allow cities with combined sewer systems, like those along the Merrimack River, to finally make the major infrastructure changes needed to prevent CSO releases.

Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



Lori Trahan



Chris Pappas



Seth Moulton



Ann McLane Kuster