Background

The drinking water and wastewater pipelines under our feet and treatment plants in our communities are important components of our nation's environmental and public health infrastructure. However, many of these facilities are aging and in need of replacement or repair. A significant investment is necessary to ensure our water infrastructure can meet the demands of the 21st century.

American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) has given drinking water and wastewater infrastructure a grade of "D-" in their latest report card. A recent ASCE report found that by 2020, unreliable infrastructure will cost businesses $147 billion ad households $59 billion per year. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that there is a $534 billion gap between current investment and projected needs over the next 20 years for water and wastewater infrastructure. Among the many problems that older systems face are overflows during major rainstorms that send raw sewage into our waters and water main breaks – over 240,000 a year – that cause everything from traffic jams to supply disruptions.

Solution

Our nation's water infrastructure needs have grown while federal funding for clean water has declined. This pushes more and more costs on local governments and ratepayers, whose rates

have grown at twice the rate of inflation in recent years. We need new sources of revenue to meet our communities' water infrastructure and environmental restoration needs. Similar dedicated funding is available for our nation's transportation systems – it's time to establish a trust fund for water infrastructure. A Clean Water Trust Fund, funded by those who contribute to water quality problems and those who use our water systems, will provide a deficit-neutral, consistent and protected source of revenue to help states replace, repair, and rehabilitate critical drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities.

How it Would Work: The Clean Water Trust Fund would assess new fees on: water-based beverages, items disposed of in wastewater (such as toilet paper), and the pharmaceutical industry. It would also include a study to determine additional revenue sources. These new revenue sources would raise approximately $ *10 billion* a year. Most of the funding would be distributed as grants and loans through the existing Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds. Additional funding would be available for research and development, green infrastructure, small water systems, combined sewer overflow, efficiency, and other priorities.

The Water Protection and Reinvestment Act Will:

- Protect public health by providing the funding communities need to provide safe drinking water and sewer service.

- Restore the environment by decreasing the number and severity of combined sewer overflows, increasing funds for state environmental restoration efforts, reducing the presence of pharmaceuticals in our water supply, and providing incentives for green infrastructure that reduces energy use and withstands the impacts of global warming and.

- Create jobs by investing in projects to repair and replace aging systems. A $10 billion investment would create between 200,000 and 267,000 new jobs in engineering, construction and other industries .

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