



THE METROPOLITAN WATER DISTRICT
OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

Office of the General Manager

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Betty McCollum
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Joyce
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) Program

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman McCollum, and Ranking Member Joyce:

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (Metropolitan) urges you to provide at least \$70 million in funding for the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program in Fiscal Year 2021 (FY21). Metropolitan is a regional wholesaler that provides water for 26 member agencies to deliver - either directly or through their sub-agencies - to nearly 19 million people living in Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino, San Diego and Ventura counties.

WIFIA is a successful federal program that provides low interest loans for large regional water projects. This new program issued its first loans in 2017 and to date 24 WIFIA loans have closed, providing \$5.3 billion in credit assistance to help finance water infrastructure projects, including eight projects in California. Several Metropolitan member agencies and sub-agencies are either in the process of applying for WIFIA loans or have already received them.

The House's FY21 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill includes no new direct appropriations for WIFIA. Instead, the bill would rescind all outstanding unobligated WIFIA appropriations from Fiscal Years 2017- 2019 and use this funding, estimated to be roughly \$71 million, to support new loans in FY21. As a result, new projects will be forced to compete with projects already in the application pipeline. Ultimately, this approach will fund fewer water infrastructure projects.

Chairwoman Lowey, Ranking Member Granger, Chairwoman McCollum, Ranking Member Lowey

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Metropolitan appreciates the Appropriations Committee work to exercises oversight over federal agencies and ensure our nation's fiscal resources our responsibly managed. It is our hope you can accomplish this goal without impacting the WIFIA program. WIFIA is an important and valuable tool for funding water infrastructure projects that compliments EPA's State Revolving Fund program. Together these programs help communities finance critical water infrastructure projects that ensure communities have access to safe reliable drinking water.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jeff Kightlinger". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeff" being more prominent than the last name "Kightlinger".

Jeffrey Kightlinger
General Manager

cc: Southern California Congressional Delegation