

July 17, 2026

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
Chairman
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works

The Honorable Sheldon Whitehouse
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Environment and
Public Works

Dear Chairman Capito and Ranking Member Whitehouse,

On behalf of the nation's more than 19,000 cities, towns and villages, the National League of Cities (NLC) applauds the bipartisan efforts of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works in developing and passing the Water Resources Development Act of 2026 (S. 4949). This critical legislation addresses two local government priorities: maintaining the two-year authorization cycle for projects and studies under the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and reauthorizing key water infrastructure funding and financing programs under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. **We urge Congress to enact legislation by the end of the year that achieves these goals.**

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) drives investment in navigation, flood protection and ecosystem restoration in communities. Local governments own and manage much of this infrastructure, including ports and harbors, inland waterways, levees, and dams that protect public health and safety and our natural resources. WRDA is critical to helping communities build, maintain and improve this critical infrastructure, while growing our national and local economies.

We thank committee leaders for including provisions, projects and studies that address flood mitigation and resilience through nonstructural approaches to flood and coastal storm risk management. With the rise in increasingly catastrophic and costly extreme weather events, intense flooding has become an unwelcome reality for many communities. Local leaders ask for a strong federal partner to make communities more resilient. To that end, we are pleased to see the proposal for an intergovernmental nonstructural working group to advise on nonstructural features and guidance for project implementation.

Additionally, as water infrastructure needs and costs in communities continue to grow, we are pleased that the bill includes reauthorization of the foundational federal financing programs and key grant and technical assistance programs that help communities upgrade and improve their drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure. These programs include the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA), as well as numerous targeted grant programs to help communities address PFAS contamination and other emerging contaminants, remove lead pipes, manage stormwater, increase water system resilience to natural disasters, strengthen cybersecurity, deploy new technologies, increase water sector workforce opportunities and more.

In general, NLC supports the reauthorization levels included in the legislation, but we urge Congress to provide reauthorization levels equivalent to current levels, at a minimum, for all water infrastructure programs.

On behalf of the nation's cities, towns and villages, thank you again for working in a bipartisan and timely manner to move this important piece of legislation. We look forward to working with you to ensure that the safety and modernization of our nation's water infrastructure remains a top national priority and that communities have the resources they need to provide safe, reliable and affordable water services. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact Carolyn Berndt at 202-626-3101 or Berndt@nlc.org.

Sincerely,



Clarence E. Anthony
CEO and Executive Director