GREAT LAKES AND ST. LAWRENCE CITIES INITIATIVE
L'ALLIANCE DES VILLES DES GRANDS LACS ET DU SAINT-LAURENT

A Resolution Submitted by Mount Vernon, NY

CLOSING THE DRINKING-WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING GAP THROUGH ROBUST FEDERAL INVESTMENTS IN THE DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND

May 2024

WHEREAS the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF), established by the 1996 amendments to the Safe Drinking Water Act, is the primary mechanism for distributing federal assistance for drinking-water infrastructure projects from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to states and public water systems.

AND WHEREAS the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence River Basin is home to severe drinking-water infrastructure challenges, including but not limited to heavy concentrations of lead service lines, high levels of contamination by per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and rising costs of water-infrastructure improvements and water-service delivery.

AND WHEREAS the DWSRF is a vitally important program supporting basin communities in achieving public-health goals and safeguarding equitable access to clean, safe and affordable water for all basin residents.

AND WHEREAS the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) provides $11.73 billion for the DWSRF in addition to $15 billion for lead service line replacement and $4 billion for per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances and other emerging contaminants over five years, with funding remaining available through Fiscal Year (FY) 2026.

AND WHEREAS the U.S. Congress has provided approximately $1.13 billion annually to the DWSRF in the last five appropriation cycles spanning FY20 through FY24.

AND WHEREAS the 7th Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment (DWINSA) estimated a $625 billion need nationwide for capital improvements to drinking-water infrastructure over the next two decades.

AND WHEREAS Congress has shown in recent appropriations cycles an increasing preference for channeling DWSRF funds through the Community Project Funding (CPF) mechanism, thereby reducing base appropriations for the DWSRF and undermining the continued financial health of the program.

AND WHEREAS reduced base appropriations for the DWSRF harm states and communities by reducing 1) principal forgiveness available to state-defined disadvantaged communities, 2) set-aside funds to support program administration and technical assistance for local communities and 3) availability of future funds from repaid loans.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

- EPA should seek no less than $3 billion for the DWSRF in its annual budget proposals to Congress, recognizing the necessity of closing the drinking-water infrastructure funding gap between modest annual appropriations for the DWSRF and its own estimates of drinking-water infrastructure needs, per the 7th DWINSA

- Congress should increase base appropriations for the DWSRF to $3 billion in the FY25 Appropriations Act for the Interior, Environment and Related Agencies

- Congress should continue CPFs for drinking-water infrastructure projects. However, CPFs for drinking-water infrastructure projects must supplement robust base appropriations for the DWSRF and not threaten the overall integrity of the program

- The Mayors Commission on Water Equity will continue to advocate for robust funding for federal, state and local programs – including the DWSRF – to close the drinking-water infrastructure funding gap in basin communities

- The Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative proudly joins the Coalition to Save the SRFs and looks forward to working collaboratively with coalition partners to promote equitable access to clean, safe and affordable water for all basin residents

AND FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED THAT copies of this resolution will be distributed to: Michael Regan, Administrator, EPA; Bruno Pigott, Acting Assistant Administrator for Water, EPA; SRF Administrators in Great Lakes States and select members of the U.S. House Appropriations Committee, U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee and the Great Lakes Task Force.