

**COVID-19 Advocacy Update: House Proposes Water Assistance;  
Senate Debate Continues**  
***NACWA, Water Sector Urge Members to Contact Congress!***

Congress continues working around the clock to reach agreement on its next round of coronavirus stimulus legislation – **and NACWA is pleased that proposals under consideration include water/wastewater assistance.**

Most notably, the House's stimulus package that was released Monday evening, the *Take Responsibility for Workers and Families Act*, includes \$1.5 Billion for water/wastewater ratepayer assistance which would be funneled via the established Low-Income Heat and Energy Assistance (LIHEAP) programs. Water and wastewater providers would enter into agreements with their state to support low-income households. NACWA is working closely with the LIHEAP associations to support this concept.

The House's stimulus package also proposes an additional \$1.5 Billion for grants through the Children and Family Services Program to assist low-income water/wastewater ratepayers. Congress is evaluating the efficacy of both programs in potentially getting water assistance out the door efficiently.

The Senate package, however, does not currently include low-income assistance but is largely focused on direct assistance to individuals and businesses. We are working closely with Senate offices in the meantime to advance these concepts.

In addition to low-income assistance, we are advocating for grants and low-income loans for clean water agency operational and infrastructure assistance. Congressional staff indicate these proposals may be suited for potential future stimulus rounds that focus on the economic recovery, including jobs and infrastructure investment.

**As negotiations continue, a broad group of water sector organizations has developed a unified "ask" letter to the Hill that we urge every utility to share with your Congressional delegation – along with a snapshot of how coronavirus is impacting your utility and how you are responding.**

The water sector's asks as outlined in the letter are:

- Federal assistance for low-income water/wastewater ratepayers and making utilities whole as they defer shut offs and reinstate service during the pandemic;
- Grants or low interest loan funding to help support utility operations at a time when revenues are seriously impacted; and
- Strong funding for established federal clean water infrastructure investment programs.

The pace of negotiations on coronavirus response is without comparison. Congressional staff are working around the clock to prepare for multiple rounds of stimulus simultaneously. NACWA has been in near-constant communication with Hill staff over the past week and will continue to do so but – at a time when the importance of sanitation is paramount and utilities are stepping up to the challenges – Congress needs to hear directly from you!

Please feel free to forward the [letter linked here](#) and share your utility's experience. Contact NACWA staff at [ksurfus@nacwa.org](mailto:ksurfus@nacwa.org) (202-833-4655) or [jsakovic@nacwa.org](mailto:jsakovic@nacwa.org) (216-407-5800) to discuss further. Thank you!

