



**The American
Institute
of Architects**



**American Society of
Landscape Architects**



Senator John Barrasso
Chair, Senate Environment and Public
Works Committee
410 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Senator Tom Carper
Ranking Member, Senate Environment and
Public Works Committee
456 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senators Barrasso and Carper,

On behalf of our millions of members nationwide, we write to commend you on your comprehensive and forward-thinking draft legislation: Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (DWIA2020) and America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (AWIA2020).

Our nation’s water infrastructure—whether drinking water and wastewater systems, localized stormwater management, or flood control at the watershed level—is critical to the health, safety, and economic security of all Americans. We applaud the committees bipartisan effort and dedication to addressing these issues in the draft legislation released last week, particularly through your reliance on green infrastructure. As you continue to advance this critical bi-annual

legislation, we look forward to refining provisions to enact legislation that effectively leverage green infrastructures' many benefits.

Green infrastructure can be extremely effective in the management of water movement through communities and provides co-benefits such as increased property values, improved air and water quality, increased recreational opportunities, and reduced noise pollution among others and can be cost competitive compared to gray forms of infrastructure. Green infrastructure helps build resilient communities, ultimately saving lives and dollars. A recent National Institute of Building Sciences report found that every \$1 spent on hazard mitigation saves the nation \$11 in future disaster costs. Green infrastructure projects are especially important in low income communities and communities of color, as there is a disproportionate absence of green infrastructure amenities and the associated benefits. For these reasons, we specifically applaud your dedication to investments in stormwater infrastructure (AIWA2020 Section 2007).

We also applaud your efforts to increase public access to the green infrastructure created by the United States Army Corps of Engineers for recreational activities (AWIA2020 Section 1096). The more the public uses and enjoys green infrastructure built by the USACE, the more they will support it.

Further, we appreciate your dedication to the resiliency of drinking water and wastewater systems (DWIA2020 Section 9 and AWIA2020 Section 2001). Because of the increasing frequency and severity of flood and drought emergencies in the United States, keeping our drinking water and wastewater systems operational and available for public use during these disasters is crucial to keeping people safe. In vulnerable, low-income, and communities of color, there has been unequal access to safe drinking water and a disproportionate exposure to combined sewer overflows and storm sewer overflows, both of which are especially exacerbated during severe flooding and extreme weather events. Green infrastructure is one of many tools that can be deployed on a case-by-case basis when addressing the vulnerabilities of these systems. We would simply urge that the Committee extend these two fantastic programs to water systems—and communities—of all sizes.

Finally, because we must be able to define our challenges before we can keep infrastructure of all kinds safe from natural disasters, we commend your coastal mapping provisions (AWIA2020 Section 1079).

We also applaud further investment in green infrastructure through higher authorized levels for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The Clean Water SRF program has been incredibly successful since its inception in 1987, supporting investment in more than \$138 billion to communities through over 41,000 assistance agreements. However, there is

still a large backlog of infrastructure needs. The Environmental Protection Agency estimates that our nation faces more than \$271 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs over the next 25 years just to maintain current levels of service. Thank you for your support to-date, and for the authorization increases to the Clean Water SRF already included in AWIA 2020. We urge you to substantially increase the authorization. States are required to use no less than 10% of their Clean Water SRF capitalization grants for projects that use green infrastructure and other innovative activities. A portion of every additional dollar will go to green infrastructure solutions, and the additional benefits described above. As you move this draft through the legislative process, we urge you to increase the Clean Water SRF authorized levels in recognition of this urgency.

All communities—of any size and in any location—deserve the health, safety, and economic security that investing in our nation’s water infrastructure provides. Your legislation makes tremendous advances in this regard, and we sincerely congratulate you on your efforts. We stand ready to work with you and support these important provisions.

Sincerely,

American Institute for Architects

American Rivers

American Society of Civil Engineers

American Society of Landscape Architects

City Parks Alliance

National Association for Clean Water Agencies

National Municipal Stormwater Alliance

National Recreation and Parks Association

The Trust for Public Land

Water Environment Federation