

UTILITY WORKERS UNION OF AMERICA

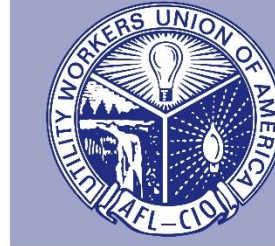
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May 5, 2023

Rep. John Garamendi
2004 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Rep. Mike Bost
352 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA) Support for H.R. 250, the Clean Water SRF Parity Act

Dear Representatives,

The Utility Workers Union of America (UWUA), representing some 45,000 workers in the electric, gas and water utility sectors across the U.S., is pleased today to offer our support for H.R. 250, the Clean Water SRF Parity Act, a bill we see as a vital step toward supporting the revitalization of wastewater infrastructure across the country but particularly in more rural, economically distressed locales.

In the water utility sector, our members perform the day-to-day operation, maintenance, and repair work necessary to keep both drinking and wastewater systems flowing, for both public and private employers. Our members know at first-hand the critical state of much of our nation's water infrastructure, recognize and support the need for both public and private dollars to be invested in these life-sustaining systems, and applaud the introduction of this legislation to afford private wastewater systems the same access to State Revolving Fund (SRF) dollars that have been available to private drinking water systems for decades.

The SRF program's low-interest loans have long been a mainstay for the improvement of crucial infrastructure, particularly in resource-challenged communities. As many of our members live and work in rural America, we know full well the investment that is needed in these areas. Further, our members have experienced the additional stress that can be placed on communities that lose much of their tax base due to the closure of large industrial facilities, such as coal or nuclear power plants. Without an influx of private capital and the availability of state funds to underpin this community investment, the degradation of infrastructure often accelerates.

As private wastewater providers are not currently eligible for SRF programs, this can undermine the ability of private investment to be made into distressed systems sorely in need of upgrade and repair in communities lacking the means to do so. Using SRF funds can alter the business case for a particular system to ensure profitability and incentivize investment. In turn, reconstituting these systems protects public health, recharges public tax coffers and, most importantly for future UWUA members working in these areas, can result in the type of family and community-supporting jobs that our current members enjoy and that act as an economic anchor.

For these reasons, we support the Clean Water SRF Parity Act, to amend the eligibility provisions of the clean water SRF program, allowing for all wastewater providers, both public and private, to access the program's low interest loans, and urge Congress to act on this legislation as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

James T. Slevin
National President
Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO