



CHARLES PERRY
TEXAS STATE SENATOR
DISTRICT 28

August 9, 2023

The Honorable Patty Murray, Chair
U.S. Senate Appropriations Committee
Room S-128, The Capitol
Washington, D.C., 20510

The Honorable Kay Granger, Chair
2308 Rayburn Office Building
United States House of Representatives
Washington, D.C., 20510

Dear Chair Murray and Chair Granger:

As members of the Texas Senate, we serve 31 districts covering the needs of more than 30 million Texans. The population provides not only the food, fiber, and fuel for our state but the nation. Additionally, the state is home to 1,300 new residents both born and relocations a day. Due to this enormous burden, we request the full State Revolving Fund (SRF) allotment for each program for 2024.

As you are aware, Congress created the SRF programs over 30 years ago as state-run, federally subsidized loan programs. In our state, the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) administers the program. The TWDB has an established reputation with stakeholders, local communities, and state officials. Because of their commitment to understanding the needs of all Texans, they administer the SRF with detail and strong oversight. Leadership and staff from the agency often visit with local officials to personally help them through an application process like the SRF program. This and other water infrastructure funding are all part of a coordinated plan to provide water to a growing state.

Without the full allotment of SRF money to the TWDB, projects will go undone. The application process is historically overprescribed leaving communities waiting for the next round. In the last three years, communities have requested 7-8 times more in funding than is annually made available (averaged \$258 million available versus \$1.8 billion requested). Many states, including Texas, have planned for the next allotment in combination with the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) funding to fix critical water infrastructure. With earmarks pulling from the state's expected funding, more projects will go unfunded. The historical SRF funding allowed "all boats to rise," covering multiple communities with regional and statewide coordination into an overall statewide water plan. The "earmark" philosophy undermines these coordinated efforts to ensure that all communities and their needs are met.

While many believe the IIJA funds are increasing the amount of available funding, a large majority of IIJA funds are required to be given as principal forgiveness, which reduces the ability to leverage the funds as low-interest loans.

We encourage Congress to re-establish previous levels of funding so that the states can meet the needs of their residents. Infrastructure is one of those non-partisan issues that all Texans need, and citizens expect from their government. I am asking the SRF funding be restored to previously funded levels to provide continuity in the work that has begun and will continue for decades to meet the challenge of providing safe, clean, and adequate water supply.

Sincerely,

Charles Perry

Chair, Texas Senate Committee on Water, Agriculture, and Rural Affairs

cc: Texas Congressional Delegation; The Honorable Greg Abbott, Governor; The Honorable Dan Patrick, Lt. Governor; The Honorable Dade Phelan, Speaker; The Honorable Tracy King, Chairman

Senator Carole Alvarado

Senator Kelly Hancock
Chair, Veterans Affairs

Senator Mayes Middleton

Senator Paul Bettencourt
Chair, Local Government

Senator Juan "Chuy" Hinojosa

Senator Robert Nichols
Chair, Transportation

Senator Brian Birdwell
Chair, Natural Resources and
Border Security

Senator Joan Huffman
Chair, Finance

Senator Tan Parker

Senator Cesar Blanco

Senator Bryan Hughes
Chair, State Affairs and
Jurisprudence

Senator Angela Paxton

Senator Donna Campbell
Chair, Nominations

Senator Nathan Johnson

Senator Charles Schwertner
Chair, Business & Commerce

Senator Brandon Creighton
Chair, Education

Senator Phil King

Senator Kevin Sparks

Senator Sarah Eckhardt

Senator Lois Kolkhorst
Chair, Health and Humans
Services

Senator Drew Springer

Senator Pete Flores

Senator Morgan LaMantia

Senator Royce West

Senator Roland Gutierrez

Senator Jose Menendez

Senator John Whitmire
Chair, Criminal Justice

Senator Bob Hall
Chair, Administration

Senator Borris Miles

Senator Judith Zaffirini