

March 21, 2025

The Honorable Lee Zeldin
Administrator, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Administrator Zeldin and Secretary Rollins,

We, the undersigned, write to urge the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to take decisive action in fulfilling President Donald Trump's pledge to provide clean and affordable water to all Americans. Access to reliable water infrastructure is fundamental to public health, economic development, and environmental protection. Yet, many communities across the country, particularly in rural, low-income, and under-resourced areas, continue to struggle with outdated, failing, or unaffordable water systems.

Ensuring clean water for all Americans requires strong federal, state, tribal and local leadership, strategic investment, and a commitment to streamlining support for communities in need. Through the efforts of the Water Subcabinet, we call upon all federal agencies to prioritize federal funding and partnerships for state and local water resources and infrastructure projects and programs in the areas that need them most, streamlining regulatory approvals and ensuring that resources are quickly, efficiently and effectively directed to the communities they are meant to serve. Such efforts will also help to facilitate the reshoring of American manufacturing and jobs that will help to rebuild and revitalize many rural and low-income communities.

Additionally, we urge the EPA and USDA to enhance technical assistance programs aimed at strengthening the capacity of local water systems. These programs should focus on direct, on-site support to improve regulatory compliance, financial management, emergency preparedness, and workforce development. High-performing nonprofit organizations with demonstrated expertise in water and wastewater management should be prioritized in providing this assistance to ensure the best outcomes.

Water affordability remains a critical issue for many households, and we encourage the EPA to work with other federal agencies, state governments, and local utilities to build on and expand proven programs that help low-income families afford their water and wastewater bills. No American should be deprived of essential water services due to financial hardship, and a sustainable assistance framework is essential to address this ongoing challenge.

Furthermore, exploration of voluntary regionalization and consolidation options for struggling water systems should be encouraged where feasible, as these efforts can lead to improved service quality, cost efficiency, and long-term sustainability. The EPA, in collaboration with the USDA and other agencies, should prioritize financial and technical assistance to facilitate such partnerships where they benefit communities.

Innovation in water treatment and infrastructure management is also vital. We urge the EPA to accelerate the adoption of advanced water technologies, including desalination, filtration, water reuse, monitoring, and AI-driven management systems. Regulatory barriers that unnecessarily hinder innovation should be reviewed and, where appropriate, revised to enable the deployment of new solutions while maintaining strong public health and environmental standards.

Finally, one of the most cost-effective strategies for protecting our water supplies is restoring the health of our rivers from which so many communities obtain their drinking water and enjoy economic and recreational benefits. Such strategies include reconnecting floodplains, removing inflow barriers, and minimizing stormwater runoff through market-based and nature-based solutions that EPA and USDA have means to incentivize.

We stand ready to support the EPA and USDA in these critical efforts and urge swift and comprehensive action to make clean and affordable water a reality for every American. Thank you for your attention to this important matter, and we look forward to working together to achieve these goals.

Sincerely,

American Conservation Coalition
American Rivers
American Water
American Water Works Association
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
California Association of Sanitation Agencies
ConservAmerica
Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities
Environmental Council of the States
KETOS
McWane
Moonshot Missions
National Association of Water Companies
National Rural Water Association
National Wildlife Federation
Rural Community Assistance Partnership
Trout Unlimited
Veolia
Veralto
Water Environment Federation
Water Finance Exchange
Water Reuse Association
Xylem