

26 September 2017

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor
Executive Chamber
New York State Capitol
Albany, NY 12224

Subject: Letter of Support for S3293/A3907 – Relates to establishing the safe water infrastructure action program.

Dear Governor Cuomo,

Thank you for your support of capital funding for water infrastructure in this year's state budget, including \$1 billion for infrastructure replacement and repair and \$10 million for emergency financial assistance facilitated by the NYS Environmental Facilities Corporation and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation.

The New York Rural Water Association, the New York Water Environment Association, and the New York Section American Water Works Association represent the rural, suburban and urban water/wastewater, and drinking water interests of the New York water sector, respectively. Together, these organizations and their over 7,000 members work to maintain the quality of New York's water and ensure that all New York State residents, no matter if they are in New York City or New Lebanon, have access to safe, clean, and reliable water.

The water infrastructure programs put forth by the FY 2017 budget are essential as they are designed to address capital projects, replacement and upgrading critical infrastructure. While these programs are necessary and essential tools for replacing and building new infrastructure, they do not address the underlying issue of increasing maintenance requirements and operating expenses.

Insufficient Operation and Maintenance (O&M) funding is a major contributor to our infrastructure issues. Years of unavoidable deferring maintenance of critical infrastructure due to insufficient savings and inability to apply for government funding are just some of the reasons that have led to insufficient O&M funding.

There have been calls for a more permanent source of funding for our infrastructure, one that addresses and supports O&M activities. The Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program (SWAP) is designed to provide municipalities with water, sewer and storm water infrastructure, an annual supplemental funding stream to support operation and maintenance activities. Just like the successful Consolidated Local Street and Highway Improvement Program (CHIPS), municipalities would know what their annual SWAP allotment would be. This would afford them the opportunity to perform maintenance and/or replacement, which can be performed by

municipal staff. These would be smaller projects such as equipment replacements, manhole rehabilitation or water line replacement and would not require engineering and the associated costs. The long-term sustainability of the systems would improve through the increased operation and maintenance funding and rates could stabilize and remain affordable.

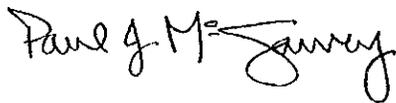
Some of the infrastructure in New York dates back over 100 years and the interconnectivity of water means that if the infrastructure fails in one location, many cities, towns and villages will also be affected. For these reasons, the NY Rural Water Association, the NY Water Environment Association and the NY Section American Water Works Association support S3292/A3907 and urge you to push for its success in the upcoming legislative session.

We thank you for your service, time, and consideration.

Sincerely,



John O'Connell
President
New York Rural Water Association



Paul J. McGarvey, P.E.
President
New York Water Environment Association



Christopher Wheland
Chair
New York Section American Water Works Association