May. XX, 2020

[Insert Congress Person]

RE: COVID-19 Financial Impact

Dear [Insert Congress Person]:

Thank you for your leadership and swift action to confront the public health crisis caused by COVID-19.  I am writing to request that future coronavirus response legislation includes funding for drinking water and clean water utilities (herein referred to as water utilities).

As a utility representing [insert number] of your constituents in [insert community], I am writing on behalf of our customers at [insert utility] to request that subsequent phases of economic stimulus legislation address the significant economic impacts from the coronavirus pandemic on water utilities.

Reliable drinking water and access to clean water plays a critical role in mitigating the spread of the coronavirus. As the nation continues to grapple with the increasingly devastating effects from the coronavirus, utilities around the country are working tirelessly to ensure their customers continue to have safe and reliable water services and to protect the health and safety of their workforce.

However, the economic impacts of coronavirus are expected to be enormous. Decreased revenue from households and businesses that are less able to pay their bills, as well as the sudden drop-off in industrial and business water usage could lead to billions of dollars in lost revenue. Water utilities will also incur additional costs for ongoing emergency operations during the course of the pandemic. Without federal assistance, these costs will be passed on to local customers through higher rates.

[Insert utility] is ensuring that every customer has access to safe, clean reliable water during the pandemic and understands there will be financial difficulties for our customers.  [Insert utility] has suspended disconnection of service and fees associated with late payments. As of [insert date], [Insert utility] has experienced a drastic increase in delinquent accounts (approximately [insert number] on [March 1, 2020], to more than [insert number] on [May 1, 2020]) and bad debt already totaling more than [insert number]. As the crisis continues, we expect our amount of bad debt to increase dramatically.

As Congress considers coronavirus response legislation, I urge that the following be included in the bill:

* Federal assistance to cover costs associated with moratoriums on water service disconnections, or reconnections of delinquent accounts, that water systems have implemented in response to the pandemic;
* Grant or low interest loan funding to help support utility operations at a time when revenues are dropping dramatically; and
* Inclusion of funding for all utility providers through existing water infrastructure investment programs such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF) and Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) programs. [Insert utility] has a list of “shovel ready” projects that would help re-start the economy in [insert community], through job creation, sustainable growth, and sustainability of operations (the complete list totals over $[insert number]). Some examples from that submittal include:
  + [insert list/brief description of example projects]

[insert utility] provides life-sustaining services that protect public health, and we will continue to work through this crisis alongside other essential workers and first responders in our community.

I ask Congress to recognize the needs of water utilities and provide federal assistance to address ratepayer burdens and make utilities whole for doing their part to respond to the coronavirus pandemic.  Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,