



June 28, 2006

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Chair
Senate Appropriations Committee
S-128 Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Cochran:

On behalf of the Great Lakes and St. Lawrence Cities Initiative, a coalition of more than 80 mayors dedicated to the long-term restoration and protection of the Great Lakes, I write to request your immediate help with ensuring that FY07 funding for EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is increased to at least the Senate's FY06 level. We are extremely disappointed that the Interior Appropriations Subcommittee chose to recommend only \$687.5 million for this critically important program, which helps communities provide clean water.

As mayors of cities and towns situated along the shores of the Great Lakes, we have first-hand knowledge of how important clean water is for local economies, the environment, and quality of life of our residents and visitors. Moreover, with 95 percent of the country's freshwater supply and 20 percent of the world's freshwater supply, the importance of the Great Lakes extends well beyond the Midwest region. They simply cannot be taken for granted.

The CWSRF is essential for many mayors in the Great Lakes region. It offers communities low-interest loans to assist with very costly repairs and upgrades of water and sewer infrastructure. These repairs and upgrades help protect and improve water quality, stop combined sewer overflows and conserve water resources for millions of people.

Ongoing cuts to the CWSRF severely impact communities. In a short span of five years, funding for this program has been slashed by more than \$450 million, from \$1.35 billion to \$887 million. If the Subcommittee's recommendation is approved, it would be cut by another \$200 million. Faced with such significant reductions in

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federal water funds, many municipalities must sacrifice other important local needs or increase local water rates for consumers.

Much progress has been made in recent years to improve water quality in the Great Lakes and nationwide, due in part to support from the Senate, but much more work remains. I strongly urge you to consider the impact on clean water, and on communities and their residents, as you determine the level of FY07 funding for the CWSRF.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Richard M. Daley
Founding Chair and Director
GLSLCI

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