

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 31, 2016

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Tom Udall
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment, and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairwoman Murkowski and Ranking Member Udall:

We are writing to urge you to support the Administration's request for including \$6.5 million in the FY2017 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) appropriations bill for a pilot project to assist communities successfully implement plans under EPA's Integrated Planning Initiative.

The Integrated Municipal Stormwater and Wastewater Planning Approach Framework (Framework) outlines a flexible new approach to help communities meet their regulatory obligations under the CWA. If successfully implemented, the Framework could help communities more affordably manage their clean water responsibilities while maintaining water quality standards.

For this approach to succeed, however, communities must develop an Integrated Plan outlining water quality goals, human health and regulatory issues that they need to address, an assessment of existing systems, an evaluation of a communities' financial capability, an evaluation of cost-effective approaches for addressing identified issues, metrics to measure success, and a process for incorporating adaptive management techniques. States and the EPA would evaluate and approve Integrated Plans with final implementation remaining in the hands of the municipality. The core purpose of an Integrated Plan is to enable communities to establish CWA regulatory priorities and implementation schedules that are affordable for ratepayers. The requested funding would ensure that all areas of the country may participate in this effort while enabling this new model for meeting CWA obligations to be effectively evaluated nationwide.

An Integrated Planning approach to CWA obligations can potentially save ratepayers millions of dollars while focusing clean water investments in a way that ensures the greatest water-quality benefit. As you well know, communities are under enormous financial pressure to maintain critical services for their residents, including education, fire and safety and critical public health infrastructure including drinking water and clean water. We know the demands on the Committee are numerous, but urge your support for EPA's Integrated Planning Initiative which will benefit communities nationally.

Sincerely,



Sherrod Brown
U.S. Senator



Roy Blunt
U.S. Senator