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March 19, 2013

The Honorable Barbara Boxer
Chair, Committee on Environment
and Public Works
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable David Vitter
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment
and Public Works
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support for Clean Water Infrastructure in S. 601

Dear Chairwoman Boxer and Ranking Member Vitter:

On behalf of over 36,000 members of Water Environment Federation (WEF), thank you for including legislative language in S. 601, the Water Resources Development Act of 2013 (WRDA), to create a Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Authority (WIFIA) (Title X). The pilot program being created will give communities a much needed additional funding mechanism to repair or replace our nation's deteriorating water infrastructure.

The need for investment in our essential clean water infrastructure is greater than ever, and States and local governments are facing the most serious budget challenges in a generation, yet federal assistance is at one of the lowest levels in 40 years. Your leadership and commitment to help communities address this serious challenge are very much appreciated by WEF and all in the clean water community.

As you know, WEF and other organizations have been strong advocates for WIFIA as an innovative complement to state revolving loan fund (SRF) programs. The Clean Water SRF has been very successful in assisting communities in protecting waterways. While the SRF will remain the primary tool in the federal financial assistance toolbox, WIFIA can provide an important option when the SRF is unable to provide the necessary funding. WEF is pleased to note that you share that opinion by the inclusion of Section 10002(1) of the WRDA bill.

WEF is also pleased to note that S. 601 lifts the cap on the number of projects that will be eligible for assistance under the WIFIA pilot program. This will allow additional communities to access loans and loan guarantees, and give Congress a better opportunity to determine the success of the five-year pilot program

The Honorable Barbara Boxer and The Honorable David Vitter
March 19, 2013
Page 2

As the leading professional organization for the professionals who operate and maintain the nation's wastewater and stormwater infrastructure, WEF will be working closely with states and communities to provide technical training and information to help make the WIFIA pilot program a success.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to work with you to create a new source of help for States and local governments to protect water quality, create jobs, and improve the quality of life in their communities.

Respectfully,



Jeffrey A. Eger
Executive Director

Formed in 1928, the Water Environment Federation (WEF) is a not-for-profit technical and educational organization with 36,000 individual members and 75 affiliated Member Associations representing water quality professionals around the world. WEF and its Member Associations proudly work to achieve our mission of protecting water quality worldwide.

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