



February 4, 2020

HOUSE LEADERSHIP AND KEY CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEE CHAIRS ROLL OUT FRAMEWORK FOR MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING DEAL

On January 28, the House Democratic leadership (Speaker Pelosi, Majority Leader Hoyer, Majority Whip Clyburn, and Assistant Speaker Lujan) along with the chairs of the key congressional committees of jurisdiction (DeFazio of T&I, Pallone of Energy and Commerce, and Neal of Ways and Means) rolled out a **\$760 billion, 5-Year infrastructure funding framework**. It should be noted this does not come with support from the White House or Senate but the consensus in the House and thoughtful program approach provides reason for optimism.

The framework goes far past water infrastructure funding needs and includes traditional surface transportation issues, broadband, 911 updates, brownfields, safe drinking water, with mention of housing, education and natural resources. See the following for the full details: <https://transportation.house.gov/imo/media/doc/Moving%20Forward%20Framework.pdf>.

Water Infrastructure Funding Highlights Include:

- **Clean Water & Wastewater Infrastructure — \$50.5 Billion (\$10 B / year compared to \$1.7 B Authorized in Federal Fiscal Year 2020)**
 - Funds building new, modern clean water and wastewater infrastructure by investing \$40 billion in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), to address local water quality challenges, with dedicated funds for urban and rural communities with affordability concerns.
 - Encourages the use of energy-efficient and water-efficient technologies.
 - Helps communities affordably address local sewer overflow and storm water infrastructure needs, preventing pollution in local rivers and waterways, and disruptions to service.
 - Establishes a new EPA program to detect, prevent, and treat discharge of industrial chemicals, including PFAS.
- **Safe Drinking Water — \$25.4 Billion (\$5 B / year compared to \$1.3 B Authorized in Federal Fiscal Year 2020)**
 - Protects Americans' drinking water – particularly for vulnerable communities – by investing in the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund and programs to ensure clean drinking water in schools, day care centers and on Native American Reservations.
 - Provides funding to local communities dealing with PFAS contamination in the drinking

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water and requires EPA to identify and assist in remediation.

- **Water Infrastructure (Flood protection, navigation, etc.) — \$10 Billion**
 - Addresses the impact of severe weather events by tackling the backlog of Army Corps' projects designed to protect communities at risk of flooding, to enhance community resiliency, and to enhance national, regional, and local economic growth.
- **Alternative Water Source Project - \$600 Million**
 - Reauthorizes Federal investments in alternative water source projects to address critical water supply needs, especially in arid areas of the Nation.

No decision on how to pay for the package until agreement is reached on that with the Administration. DeFazio has proposed issuing infrastructure bonds and paying them back by increasing fuel taxes and indexing them to inflation, but the leadership has not endorsed this. House Republicans oppose a gas tax increase; instead prioritizing innovation, streamlining permitting and focusing attention on rural infrastructure needs. When the President released his long-term infrastructure plan, which relied mostly on private investments, as well as local and state governments, it was widely panned as unreasonable. On the positive side, the House's \$760 B framework is within the range of the Presidents call for at least \$1 trillion in infrastructure investment.

The Chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, Rep. Richard Neal (D-Mass.) will meet with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin to discuss an infrastructure package, saying he is hopeful about working with the White House on this important legislation following the passage of the bi-partisan trade deal. The **Utility Contractors Association of New England (UCANE)** is working directly with Congressman Neal and the entire Massachusetts delegation advancing these critical priorities for the CWCC. In addition, the Massachusetts delegation is pushing the Affordable Safe Drinking Water Act that would help states mitigate water infrastructure costs. Key Advocates and UTCA of NJ will be working closely with the Chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, Rep. Frank Pallone (D-NJ) as that Committee has jurisdiction over the Drinking Water SRF funding.

CWCC FLY-IN / WATER WEEK 2020 DETAILS

CWCC has again signed on as an organizational sponsor of Water Week 2020, which takes place on April 26th – May 2nd in Washington, DC. We will join with organizing partners National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), the Water Environment Federation (WEF), and the WateReuse Association (WRA) to target advocacy for greater federal investment in water infrastructure.

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After a successful experience last year, the CWCC will again have its **Member-Only Briefing** during Water Week on **Tuesday, April 28th from 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM**. **Events not held on Capitol Hill will be at the Washington Court Hotel located at 525 New Jersey Avenue NW. This hotel is within walking distance of Union Station and Capitol Hill.** The CWCC Member Briefing is being sponsored by **UCA of Illinois, UCA of New England and the UTCA of New Jersey**. At this briefing, we will hand out materials we typically prepare OR will coordinate getting you these materials in advance at your request.

The key days for Water Week are **Monday April 27th and Tuesday April 28th**. You should set a schedule that works best for your organization's needs and the availability of those you are set to meet with in DC. We have identified open slots in the schedule that would be ideal for Hill Visits but in our experience, you have to take the times slot you can get.

The schedule is as follows for CWCC MEMBER / WATER WEEK RELATED EVENTS:

Monday, April 27th

Morning: OPEN TIME FOR HILL VISITS

12:30 pm – Registration Opens for National Water Policy Fly-In

2:00 pm – 5:00 pm - Policy Sessions Lead by NACWA, WED, WRF and WateReuse

6:00 pm - Reception & Brave Blue World Screening

Tuesday, April 28th

8:00 am – Congressional Breakfast

11:00 am – 1:00 pm– CWCC Member-Only Briefing / Lunch at the Washington Court Hotel

NOTE: We will be meeting on the Mezzanine Level in the Capital / Senate Function Space.

Lunch will be provided. If anyone has any special dietary needs, please advise in advance.

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm - OPEN FOR HILL VISITS

5:30 pm - Congressional Reception on Capitol Hill

Wednesday, April 29th – Thursday April 30th

OPEN FOR HILL VISITS

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REGISTRATION

Please register for the 2020 Water Policy Fly-In online at your earliest convenience through the following website: www.waterweek.us/nwpf/

The registration fee is \$100 per person. Advance registrations must be received by **Friday, April 10, 2020**.

Please email Dan Kennedy (kennedy@utcanj.com) confirming attendance for you and/or your association members/affiliates.

Your registration fee includes access to all Water Week activities Monday and Tuesday, including the policy sessions, breakout discussions, Monday evening reception, Tuesday morning Congressional breakfast and the Congressional reception on Tuesday evening.

LODGING

Lodging is at your discretion but here are options to consider.

The organizers have secured a special group rate of \$335 per night (standard king/standard double), plus applicable taxes, at the **Washington Court Hotel**. Reservations must be made by **Monday, April 6, 2020** to receive the special rate, while rooms are available. To ensure a hotel room, contact the Washington Court Hotel at 202.628.2100. Please reference "Water Week / NACWA Block" when reserving.

Another option, negotiated by our friends at UCA of Illinois, is the Hotel Lombardy. Although it's a jump from the Water Week events hosted at the Washington Court Hotel, this is a great location on Pennsylvania Ave. They are extending the same rate as last year for CWCC members of \$289.00 per night plus applicable taxes. They have extended that rate to all CWCC members by following this link: https://bookings.hotellombardy.com/reservation/roomdetails/139725?rooms=1&adults_1=1&checkin=20200426&checkout=20200503&bookingcode=61V2I8

SHOW YOUR SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED NEPA REFORMS

The National Environmental Policy Act ("NEPA") is a foundational environmental law enacted in 1970 (exactly 50 years ago during the Nixon Era) with a mission to enhance the environment by requiring Federal agencies to evaluate environmental effects of proposed projects prior to construction. Rulemaking recently initiated by the White House Council on Environmental Quality ("CEQ") is the first significant revision of the NEPA regulations since the original regulations were promulgated in 1978. The proposal would refocus NEPA on its original intent – assessing environmental impacts of major projects

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and actions supported by the federal government – instead of being used as a mechanism for causing delays and uncertainty in planning and building projects.

According to the new proposal, its revisions would modernize the NEPA regulations and facilitate more efficient, effective, and timely NEPA reviews. The proposed changes to NEPA will result in a more expeditious, while still thorough, review process, without impacting existing environmental standards. Projects that trigger NEPA reviews are not put out to bid until its processes (and any litigation) play out. Efforts to streamline and modernize NEPA are long overdue and welcome to the infrastructure construction industry.

As a reminder, CWCC added a policy position to encourage streamlining approvals for infrastructure projects in 2019. Although most water infrastructure projects do not trigger NEPA review, a lot of underground utility work critical to the economic outlook for our members comes alongside transportation projects. Associations engaged in advocacy for energy utility project work and flooding / hardening and/or coastal resiliency should pay close attention to this proposal.

CEQ has opened a public comment period on their proposal, ending **Tuesday, March 10**. CWCC will be submitting supportive comments and sharing them with key leaders in Congress in favor of this proposal. We urge your association and its members consider doing the same.

We encourage you to “tell a story” of cost increases, delays and jobs lost because of NEPA issues. Please share with CWCC any project examples that we may be able to use to increase the impact of our comments. Opponents will be filling the docket and news stories with negative comments. **It’s critical that we make our voices heard.**

Attached to this notice is more information from our national transportation partners, ARTBA. This document includes more information on the proposal and directions on how to submit comments.

KEY ADVOCATES REPORT

Included with this notice is Key Advocates recent report which is current to the end of January.

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