

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-4404

March 23, 2015

Chairman Ken Calvert
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
B-308 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Betty McCollum
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and
Related Agencies
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Calvert and Ranking Member McCollum,

As your subcommittee begins to draft the FY2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies Appropriations, I am writing in support of prioritizing nation-wide, extramural water research through the Environmental Protection Agency's Science and Technology account. Such research is done directly in partnership by expert water nonprofit foundations in collaboration with local wastewater and drinking water utilities. For over 20 years, Congress has supported this extramural research program, which ensures that sound science governs compliance with Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act mandates, regulations, and policies.

The National Priorities Research program prioritizes funding for a cost-shared, competitive grant program within monies already being provided to the U.S. EPA Office of Research & Development budget. This research program ensures that critical water and wastewater-related research will continue to meet the needs identified by the local agencies charged with meeting federal mandates. As a testament to the importance of this research, such language was included in both the House and Senate versions of the FY2014 Consolidated Appropriations bill and the final FY2015 Consolidated Appropriations Act (H.R. 83). I respectfully request that similar text be inserted into the FY 2016 Interior, Environment and Related Agencies bill, as follows:

“Research National Priorities: The Committee Report provides \$5,000,000 which shall be used for extramural research grants, independent of the STAR grant program, to fund high-priority water quality and availability research by not-for-profit organizations who often partner with the Agency. Funds shall be awarded competitively with priority given to partners proposing research of national scope and who provide a 25 percent match. The Agency is directed to allocate funds to grantees within 180 days of enactment of this Act. The Committee is aware that EPA continues to apply STAR grant guidelines to the competitive grants being issued under this section including a limitation that sub-awards or sub-contracts should not constitute more than 40% of the total direct cost of the total project budget. The National Priorities Research program should be administered independent of such restrictive STAR grant guidelines to permit greater flexibility in program administration.”

Thank you for your attention to this matter of important national, state, and local significance. If you have any questions or comments, please contact me.

Sincerely,


Mia Love
Member of Congress