



Funding For Water and Broadband Projects



Over the past few years Congress has provided record funding for water and broadband infrastructure. However, despite these past increases in funding for both sectors, the White House and congress are now proposing cuts to these programs due to concerns about government spending and the national debt. Additionally, previously approved infrastructure funds remain held up in red tape with no projects breaking ground that were funded by the IIJA's Broadband Equity Access Deployment (BEAD) program. Congress must continue to support these critical infrastructure programs.

- **Fully Fund the Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Fund Programs.** A primary source of federal funding for drinking water and wastewater infrastructure are the Safe Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF and CWSRF) programs. These programs operate like a bank by providing low interest loans to eligible recipients for water infrastructure projects. Congressional appropriators should fully fund these programs moving forward to provide long-term certainty to public works projects and expand access to clean and safe drinking water nationwide.
- **Expand Funding for Broadband Programs in Rural Regions.** Contractors are engaged on rural broadband projects funded by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA's) ReConnect program. This program provides loans and grants to expand broadband construction to underserved rural regions nationwide. Washington stakeholders recently suggested making cuts to the program due to it being duplicative of other broadband efforts. We urge Congress to continue supporting this critical program to ensure millions of Americans can receive access to high-speed internet.
- **Expedite and Improve the Deployment of Broadband Projects.** The IIJA's BEAD program allocated over \$42 billion for broadband expansion into rural and underserved areas, yet no projects have broken ground. The Trump administration then changed many aspects of the program, including making it technologically neutral instead of a fiber priority. Contractors engaged in broadband projects nationwide have noted that changing BEAD policies have caused challenges at the state agencies that have oversight of the program, while locates of underground broadband lines that need expansion are also unavailable or inaccurate. Congress should ensure that the BEAD program moves forward as written under the law and should consider new guidance to state agencies that will make them better equipped to expedite BEAD project construction.

ACTION NEEDED

1. Fund the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds to ensure there is necessary funding to upgrade water systems;
2. Support funding for additional broadband programs, such as the ReConnect Program; and
3. Continue oversight into the deployment of the BEAD program and ensure broadband projects are not caught up in red tape.