

Congress of the United States

October 5, 2020

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate

The Honorable Peter A. DeFazio
Chairman
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

The Honorable Thomas R. Carper
Ranking Member
Committee on Environment and Public Works
United States Senate

The Honorable Sam Graves
Ranking Member
Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure
U.S. House of Representatives

Dear Chairmen Barrasso and DeFazio and Ranking Members Carper and Graves:

We urge you to include our “WIFIA Improvement Act of 2020” (H.R.8217) in any final Water Resources Development Act negotiated by you this year. This bipartisan House bill, of which we are cosponsors, would make two crucial amendments to the *Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014* (WIFIA).

First, our bill would make the existing WIFIA program more appealing to public water projects with longer useful lifecycles. Specifically, Section 2 of the bill would authorize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, at the discretion of the Administrator, to approve WIFIA financing with up to 55-year loan terms instead of the current 35-year loan term. This change would make the WIFIA program more workable for water supply and storage projects in drought-prone western states.

Second, our bill includes Section 2014(a) from the “America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020” (S.3591) regarding the budgetary treatment of WIFIA applications for Congressionally authorized projects or projects to which legal title remains held by the federal government but are operated and maintained at local expense: so-called “transferred works.” We were pleased to see this provision restoring WIFIA eligibility for water projects in California and Washington State included in the bill reported by the Committee on Environment and Public Works.

It is also our understating that this provision is needed for the USEPA to approve WIFIA applications for projects championed by the North Dakota (Fargo-Moorhead Metropolitan Area Flood Risk Management Project) and Utah (Deer Creek Reservoir Raw Water Intake Project) delegations. Given the bipartisan and bicameral support, we expect this Senate provision to remain in any final Water Resources Development Act brought to the floor.

We hope that the House and Senate will enact a Water Resources Development Act into law this year. Again, we urge you to include our bipartisan “WIFIA Improvement Act of 2020” (H.R.8217) in any final bill. Thank you for your leadership and consideration.

Sincerely,



JOHN GARAMENDI
Member of Congress



TJ COX
Member of Congress



DAN NEWHOUSE
Member of Congress



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress



JOSH HARDER
Member of Congress



DOUG LaMALFA
Member of Congress



KIM SCHRIER
Member of Congress

CC: Members of the Utah and North Dakota delegations