

For Immediate Release
May 8, 2009

CONTACTS: Sue Walitsky (Cardin) 202-224-4524
Pete Raffle (Boxer) 202-224-8832
Matt Dempsey (Inhofe) 202-224-9797
Susan Wheeler (Crapo) 202-224-5150

U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works

SENATE ENVIRONMENT & PUBLIC WORKS LEADERS INTRODUCE MAJOR LEGISLATION TO PROTECT AND MAINTAIN AMERICA'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Senators **Benjamin L. Cardin** (D-MD), Chairman of the Senate Environment and Public Works Water and Wildlife Subcommittee and EPW Chairman **Barbara Boxer** (D-CA), along with and EPW Ranking Member **James Inhofe** (R-OK), and subcommittee ranking member **Mike Crapo** (R-ID) joined together today to introduce **The Water Infrastructure Financing Act**, which provides the foundation for our nation's drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. This bipartisan agreement makes important reforms and increases investment in the Clean Water State Revolving fund, which has not been reauthorized in 22 years, and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which has not been reauthorized since 1996.

The bill contains authorizations for Clean Water State Revolving Fund and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, expands eligibility for funding for projects including storm water management, water conservation, or efficiency projects, reuse and recycling projects.

“The highest priorities of the Water and Wildlife Subcommittee are to ensure that all Americans have clean and safe drinking water and that our aging national water infrastructure can handle all that we ask of it. The health and safety of our citizens, our rivers and streams, and our economy depend on clean, flowing water,” **said Senator Cardin**. “I appreciate the bipartisan support from Chairman Boxer, Senators Inhofe and Crapo, in crafting legislation that allows us to reinvest in America, providing thousands of new jobs and meeting our basic water quality needs.”

Senator Boxer said, “Clean, safe water is essential to the health of every American. I am pleased that the four key leaders from both parties have joined together in supporting a bill that invests in protecting the health of American families, creates jobs and encourages communities to use the latest green technologies. It has been over 20 years since we have reauthorized the Clean Water Revolving Fund, and more than 12 years since we reauthorized the Drinking Water Revolving Fund – the American people have waited long enough and I look forward to working with my colleagues to move this important legislation forward.”

“I am pleased to join Senators Cardin, Crapo, and Boxer in introducing bipartisan legislation today that will help address many our nation's most pressing water needs,” **said Senator Inhofe**. “Through my leadership position on the EPW Committee, I have

made reauthorization of the SRF one of my top priorities—and we have come together to put forward a bill that balances the needs of all states, especially rural states like Oklahoma. We simply cannot afford to shortchange our nation’s water needs; in fact, investments in water infrastructure prior to disasters can even save us money. Yet for nearly twenty years, the federal government has burdened state and local government with unfunded mandates. While this bill faces a tough road ahead, I believe our bipartisan agreement represents the best opportunity in two decades to get a bill signed into law.”

Senator Crapo said, “The challenges of water use and conservation across our nation are as numerous as they are varied, with the needs of extensively developed states and rural states like Idaho rarely aligned. With this in mind, the progress the EPW Committee has made in reauthorizing the Clean Water SRF bill is outstanding. Under this bill, Idaho and other small states will receive a greater share of appropriated funds. While the bill introduced today is not perfect, it represents a good faith compromise among myself and Senators Inhofe, Cardin, and Boxer to introduce legislation that addresses many of our nation’s water needs.”

Highlights of the *Water Infrastructure Financing Act*

- Increases the Clean Water SRF to \$20 billion over five years and Drinking Water SRF to \$14.7 billion over five years.
- \$1.85 billion nationwide grant program to address combined sewer overflows
- \$60 million/year nationwide grant program to provide funding to states and municipalities to reduce lead in drinking water
- \$50 million nationwide grant program to address agriculture-related water quality issues
- New incentives, including for green infrastructure projects
- Additional flexibility in the Clean Water SRF to help low-income communities
- New Research and voluntary incentive program to address water conservation, efficiency, and recycling.

Funding allocations through the new Clean Water SRF formula are based primarily on the 2004 EPA needs survey, the most comprehensive and objective data available on our national wastewater infrastructure needs.

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