



Protecting the environment and working for a healthy community.

February 27, 2007

To: United States Congress

From: William Cooke, CCE Director of Government Relations

RE: Federal funding for water quality improvement programs in the FY 2008 Budget

THE PROMISE OF CLEAN WATER

With the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA) nearly 35 years ago, Congress made a promise to protect and improve our nation's water quality for current and future generations. Since the adoption of the CWA, clean water infrastructure investment have made significant improvements to local water quality, but significant investments are needed, as forty percent (40%) of our nation's assessed waterways fail to achieve standards. ***The 110th Congress must direct adequate financial resources and oversight to achieve the goal of making our nation's waters acceptable for fishing and swimming.***

Clean water is advanced through various federal grants and loan programs that address threats to our nation's waters, such as sewage contamination and polluted storm water runoff. It must be a priority to provide full funding for federal programs that assist state and local governments to fulfill the promise of the Clean Water Act.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) urges the 110th Congress to adopt and appropriate the following budget recommendations for clean water in FY 2008.

1. CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND (SRF)

Sewer systems throughout New York and Connecticut are aging and failing; resulting in degraded local water quality. The Clean Water SRF was created by Congress in 1987 to provide grants and zero or low interest loans to municipalities for construction of wastewater treatment systems. SRF programs have also helped finance non-structural projects to prevent and reduce stormwater pollution. In 1996, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act, which created a separate SRF for drinking water treatment and protection of surface and groundwater drinking water supplies. The SRF programs are essential to providing the investment needed to upgrade and maintain our wastewater infrastructure.

Increased investment of \$500 billion over the next 20 years is necessary to meet current clean water and drinking water infrastructure needs. The economic and environmental benefits of expanding the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water SRF programs are fiscally responsible and help expand domestic markets. According to the National Utility Contractors Association, the SRF programs generate 400,000 jobs annually, not including jobs dependent upon clean water and open beaches, such as the fishing, boating, and tourism industries. **CCE recommends funding the Clean Water SRF at \$1.105 billion and the Drinking Water SRF at \$866 million for FY 08.**

2. NON POINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, CWA SECTION 319

Through a grant process, this program funds the implementation of pollution reduction programs, including, technical and financial assistance, public education, professional training, demonstration projects and water quality monitoring.

Non-point source pollution is often the primary cause behind degraded local water quality. Non-point pollution contaminates drinking water supplies, increases beach closures, causes fish kills and limits recreational opportunities. **CCE recommends funding CWA Section 319 program at \$225 million in the FY 2008.**

3. TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL), CWA SECTION 303(D)

TMDL is the CWA program to restore the integrity of our nation's waters. Through TMDL, states and the Environmental Protection Agency identify all sources of water quality impairments to rivers, streams and lakes that fail to meet water quality standards. In addition to identifying sources of water pollution, the TMDL program develops specific goals and implements planned designs to reduce pollutant loads in to receiving water bodies. TMDLs must be developed consistent with the CWA, be compatible with related water quality programs and regulatory processes, and lead to real improvements, rather than paperwork delay. **CCE recommends funding the State Program Management Grants (CWA section 106), which funds the TMDL program, at \$233 million in the FY 2008.**

4. BEACH ACT GRANT PROGRAM

Established in 2000, the BEACH Act provides grants to states and local partners to support beach water testing and public notification programs. Regular information on beach water quality helps to protect the public from swimming in polluted waters and can help communities identify problems with their wastewater treatment systems.

Our nation's beaches provide considerable economic benefits, as well as memorable family experiences as popular tourist and recreational destinations. Unfortunately, many of our nation's beaches are polluted with bacteria and viruses posing a significant threat to public health. In 2005, pollution prompted more than 20,000 beach closings and swimming advisory days at ocean, bay and Great Lakes beaches, including 887 from NYS. Public access to water quality at our beaches is a public health right. **CCE recommends funding the Beach Act Grant Program at \$20 million in the FY 2008.**

JUSTIFICATION

Every New York State and Coastal Connecticut community is in the watershed of a major water body, such as the Niagara River, the Great Lakes of Erie and Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, the Mohawk, the Chesapeake Bay, the Hudson River, the New York City reservoir system, South Shore Estuary and the Long Island Sound. Our water resources provide drinking water for millions of residents, habitat for fish and wildlife, extraordinary recreational opportunities, and support billion dollar industries. Long Island Sound alone contributes \$8.3 billion to the regional economy, and Great Lakes Fisheries alone contribute \$4.5 billion to the economy.

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) is an 80,000 member, non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization working to protect public health and the natural environment.

CCE STRONGLY SUPPORTS FULL FUNDING OF CLEAN WATER PROGRAMS TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN THE FY 2008