December 7, 2018

Honorable Andrew Cuomo
Governor of New York State
Executive Chamber
State Capitol
Albany, NY  12224

RE:  Clean Water Infrastructure Funding Needed in SFY 2019-20 Executive Budget

Dear Governor Cuomo:

On behalf of the undersigned organizations from across New York State, we respectfully urge you to make an additional investment of at least $2.5 billion in clean water infrastructure beginning in the SFY 2019-20 Executive Budget. This new investment, combined with the remaining three years of funding under the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) of 2017, will help communities across the state make significant progress in addressing the challenges they are facing in protecting clean water for New York residents.

Our organizations are grateful for your leadership in championing the CWIA, which is providing $2.5 billion over five years to upgrade water infrastructure and help protect drinking water across our state. We are also encouraged by recent public comments in which you called for a new $10 billion investment in protecting and enhancing New York’s environment. We applaud this bold announcement and believe that a significant portion of new environmental funding should be used to address our state’s massive clean water needs.

Investments made through the CWIA are making a tremendous impact in advancing shovel-ready projects, protecting drinking water quality, and creating jobs throughout New York. According to your recent press release announcing an additional round of water infrastructure funding, $750 million in WIIA and inter-municipal grant funding is supporting nearly $2.65 billion in total project costs for vital drinking and wastewater infrastructure projects statewide, which is expected to support more than 47,000 jobs in the construction, supplier and service sectors. This funding is providing much-needed financial relief to local governments, protecting our treasured waters, safeguarding public health, and helping to drive economic development.

These investments are yielding significant results; however, we still have much work to do to address all of New York’s clean water needs. Only about 30% of those that have applied for funding under WIIA have received funding, meaning that approximately 70% of applications have not been funded. This speaks to both the popularity of the grant program, as well as the need to provide additional funding to meet the clean water infrastructure needs of communities across the state.

As you know, New York State has estimated that the combined wastewater and drinking water needs in the state exceed $80 billion over the next 20 years. Numbers like these have translated
to a reality that has meant thousands of water main breaks that wreak havoc on local economies, contaminated drinking water supplies that threaten public health, and billions of gallons of raw and combined sewage that foul our precious waterways. We have solutions to these problems, and we can’t afford not to use them.

Again, thank you for your leadership in protecting clean water in New York State. We respectfully urge you to make an additional investment of at least $2.5 billion in clean water infrastructure beginning in the SFY 2019-20 Executive Budget. Representatives from our coalition would also welcome the opportunity to meet with your staff to learn more about your proposed $10 billion investment for environmental protection, and to discuss how that can best be used to protect and restore clean water across the state.

Please feel free to reach out to Adrienne Esposito, Executive Director at Citizens Campaign for the Environment if you or your staff would like to meet with us. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

William C. Janeway  
Executive Director  
Adirondack Council

Ana Paula Tavares  
Executive Director  
Audubon New York

Mike Elmendorf  
President & CEO  
Associated General Contractors of NYS

Jill Jedlicka  
Executive Director  
Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

Adrienne Esposito  
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Citizens Campaign for the Environment

Ross J. Pepe  
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Construction Industry Council of Westchester & Hudson Valley, Inc.  
Building Contractors Association of Westchester & Mid-Hudson Region, Inc.
Peter Iwanowicz  
Executive Director  
Environmental Advocates of New York

Nisha Persaud Swinton  
Northeast Senior Organizer  
Food & Water Watch

Joan Leary Matthews  
Senior Attorney & Director  
Urban Water, Healthy People & Thriving Communities Program  
Natural Resources Defense Council

Julie Tighe  
President  
New York League of Conservation Voters

Jenny Ingroa  
Executive Director  
New York Section  
American Water Works Association (AWWA)

Geoffrey Baldwin  
President  
New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA)

David Church, AICP  
Commissioner of Planning & Water Authority Executive Director  
Orange County Water Authority

Sam Magavern  
Executive Director  
Partnership for the Public Good

Rahwa Ghirmatzion  
Executive Director  
PUSH Buffalo

Paul Gallay  
President  
Riverkeeper

Tracy Brown  
Director  
Save the Sound
Andy Bicking  
Director of Public Policy & Special Projects  
Scenic Hudson, Inc.  

Jessica Ottney Mahar  
New York Policy Director  
The Nature Conservancy  

Carter Strickland  
New York State Director  
The Trust for Public Land  

Martin Aman  
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Wayne County Water & Sewer Authority (WCW&SA)  

Antonina Simeti  
Executive Director  
Western New York Environmental Alliance