



County of Monterey

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February 1, 2024

The Honorable Alex Padilla
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Re: Support for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act

Dear Senator Padilla:

I write in support of the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) Establishment Act to establish a national, low-income water assistance program.

LIHWAP is an emergency program created by Congress to help households afford drinking water and wastewater services during the COVID-19 pandemic. This critical program expired in September 2023, ending a lifeline for low-income families in need across the country. Congress recognized the public health and economic imperative of maintaining water services by the establishment of this first ever national water assistance program. But with the increase cost of water and sewer services exceeding inflation and energy and medical while and household incomes remain stagnant, the need for the LIHWAP remains.

Water service providers, environmental and public interest organizations, consumer advocates, and labor unions agree that the LIHWAP is just as important to public health and economic development as basic needs like home energy and nutrition, which have benefitted from Federal support for decades.

The LIHWAP Establishment Act would formally establish a program to assist low-income households in paying arrearages and other rates for drinking water or wastewater services. Benefits would be targeted towards households with low incomes and the highest home water burdens; while, allowing recipients of programs like the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Social Security Disability Insurance (SSI), and means-tested Veterans programs to be categorically eligible for LIHWAP assistance.

Thank you for your continued leadership in introducing this legislation and I look forward to working with you as Chair of the Senate Environment and Public Works Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife to ensure low-income families across the country have access to clean and affordable drinking water and sanitation services.

Sincerely,

Sonia M. De La Rosa
County Administrative Officer

