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The Authoritative Resource on Safe Water®

NewsRelease

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Stimulus legislation small step forward in addressing water needs

AWWA: For water infrastructure, the glass is half full

(DENVER, CO) – President Barack Obama today signed into law an economic stimulus bill that provides \$2 billion for drinking water projects and \$4 billion for wastewater projects. American Water Works Association (AWWA) Executive Director Gary Zimmerman issued the following statement.

“For communities seeking to repair or replace critical water infrastructure, today’s signing represents an important step forward in addressing a growing national challenge. The more than \$6 billion committed for water and wastewater needs will push forward projects critical to our nation’s public health protection, fire protection, economic strength and our overall quality of life.

“While the funds committed represent only a tiny fraction of the need, AWWA is optimistic that the investment in water will jump-start many critical projects and create hundreds of thousands of new jobs. From this perspective, the glass is certainly half full.

“We applaud Congress’s decision to waive requirements that states provide matching funds, which would be difficult in today’s economic climate and will speed distribution of funds. It also makes good sense to give priority to projects that can begin construction within a year, giving utilities necessary time to complete construction plans or obtain environmental permits.

“These funds will be distributed through State Revolving Loan Fund programs with at least half being issued as grants, negative-interest loans or similar no-cost financing tools. AWWA will actively assist its members in understanding how to apply for and secure these funds, including offering a free webcast at 1 p.m. EDT Feb. 26.

“One of the hopeful upshots of a recession is that we are all forced to pay attention to things that matter most in our daily lives. The renewed focus on water infrastructure has helped bring the conversation about our buried water pipes above ground. Hopefully, this increased public awareness of the need to reinvest in water infrastructure will make us all better stewards of our water resources and systems.”

For more information on AWWA's efforts associated with economic recovery legislation, visit awwa.org/jobcreation.

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AWWA is the authoritative resource for knowledge, information, and advocacy to improve the quality and supply of water in North America and beyond. AWWA is the largest organization of water professionals in the world. AWWA advances public health, safety and welfare by uniting the efforts of the full spectrum of the entire water community. Through our collective strength we become better stewards of water for the greatest good of the people and the environment.