September 8, 2016

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the undersigned community, environmental, social justice, faith, labor, and public health groups, along with our millions of members and supporters, we urge Congress to deliver much needed federal aid to the community of Flint, Michigan in response to the devastating lead contamination its citizens continue to suffer.

Thousands of people in Flint have been exposed to dangerous levels of lead in their entire water system due to gross failures and incompetence, adversely impacting the whole of the city’s water supply. Congress needs to move expeditiously to help solve the environmental and public health disaster that mismanagement and aging infrastructure created that appears beyond the state’s ability to handle. Furthermore, it should act immediately to provide federal aid to the community to help minimize the impact of lead and other health threats to Flint’s citizens.

Additionally, investing in our water infrastructure is critical to solving the problems in Flint and preventing another environmental disaster. Congress should reauthorize and substantially bolster national infrastructure funds like the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) and the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The DWSRF provides loans and other financial assistance to water systems to improve their drinking water infrastructure while the CWSRF lends financial support for water quality infrastructure projects and can help improve source water protection. These programs need increased funding and not at the expense of other important environmental, public health, and job-creating programs.

At present, the best and most viable legislative proposal to respond to the disaster in Flint is S. 2848, the Senate Water Resources and Development Act (WRDA). This bipartisan bill passed out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee in April and carries policy provisions to direct $100 million towards Flint’s lead drinking water contamination disaster. In addition to directly funding Flint relief, the Senate WRDA establishes school and childcare lead testing programs, and appropriates $10 million for the childhood lead poisoning prevention program. Our groups urge you to move these key provisions to the floor for consideration as soon as the Senate returns from summer recess.

No amount of lead exposure is safe! The people of Flint are still suffering the physical, emotional, and financial toll of this disaster. What happened in Flint must not happen again anywhere. Congress should immediately implement solutions to aid Flint and to protect our nation’s water quality. We urge you to act immediately to move forward with effective relief efforts to help the Flint community begin long-term recovery from this environmental disaster.

Sincerely,

Advocates for a Clean Lake Erie
African American Health Alliance
Alliance for the Great Lakes
American Rivers
American Public Health Association
Bad River Watershed Association
BaySail
Black Heritage Society Inc
Black Millennials for Flint
BlueGreen Alliance
Casa de Esperanza
Clean Water Action
Congregation of St. Joseph
Delta Institute
Earthjustice
Environment America
Environment Michigan
Environmental Defense Fund
Environmental Law & Policy Center
Franciscan Action Network
Freshwater for Life Action Coalition
Freshwater Future
Friends Committee on National Legislation
Genesee County Hispanic Latino Collaborative
Genesee County NOW
GreenFaith
GreenLatinos
Headwaters Chapter, Izaak Walton League
Heart of the Lakes
Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hoosier Environmental Council
Huron River Watershed Council
Land Trust Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
League of United Latin American Citizens
League of Women Voters of the United States
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Michigan Environmental Council
Midwest Environmental Advocates
Milwaukee Riverkeeper
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Coalition Of Blacks for Reparations in America
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Abounds
Ohio Environmental Council
Physicians for Social Responsibility
Prairie Rivers Network
Presente.org
Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities Coalition
Safer Chemicals Healthy Families
Save The River
Sierra Club
Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council
Trinity Health
United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters
United Steelworkers
Utility Workers Union of America
WasteWater Education 501c3
Wisconsin Wildlife Federation
YOUR Center