




ERIE COUNTY WATER AUTHORITY INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: Jerome D. Schad, Chair
Peggy A. LaGree, Vice Chair
Michele M. Iannello, Treasurer

FROM: Charles E. Eaton, Chief Operating Officer 

CC: Terrence D. McCracken, Secretary to the Authority

DATE: October 8, 2024

SUBJECT: AWWA Legislative Priorities Update

Chairman Schad requested a brief report on federal legislation for which this board has memorialized its support.

At our June board meeting, three resolutions were adopted in support of distinct AWWA legislative priorities for the 118th Congress. These priorities included a bill establishing a Permanent Low Income Household Water Assistance Program, a bill providing liability protection for water systems regarding PFAS, and a bill to Oversee Water System Cybersecurity.

Unfortunately, none of these priorities advanced in either house of Congress this session. At this late date, with minimal legislative days remaining before election day, it is unlikely that there will be action before the current Congress adjourns. These and other bills will likely be reintroduced in the next Congress; staff will highlight these priorities with the Authority's government affairs representatives and will prioritize local support and co-sponsorship of these bills with our Senators and our local members of the House.

Additionally, I am pleased to report that the EPA approved our request to utilize federal funds secured earlier this year as Congressionally Directed Spending (or "earmarks") by former Congressman Brian Higgins for the removal of lead services. This effort was led by our Engineering team. Plans to perform this work with federal funds will go through a distinct bid and award process to ensure all specific federal provisions are strictly adhered to for the use of these funds.

Concerning the 2025 federal appropriations process, Senators Charles Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Tim Kennedy were receptive to the Authority's requests for Congressionally Directed Spending for the 2025 federal fiscal year. ECWA engineering staff worked to submit comprehensive applications for federal funding, and I am pleased to report that each federal official included our agency on their respective lists for earmarked funding, with the Senate Appropriations Committee's report including a \$1.5 million earmark, and the House committee's report including a separate earmark for slightly more than \$1.1 million. Much remains to be done by Congress before these earmarks become reality, and Authority staff and government affairs representatives will continue to monitor progress and report developments as they occur.