



UNIVERSAL ACCESS TO CLEAN WATER
FOR TRIBAL COMMUNITIES

August 29, 2023

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230 U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Speaker
House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
Minority Leader
House of Representatives
2433 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Brian Schatz
Chair, Senate Committee on Indian
Affairs
U.S. Senate
722 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
Vice Chair, Senate Committee on
Indian Affairs
U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023

Honorable Congressional Leaders:

On behalf of the Clean Water for All Coalition, we are writing to express our strong support for the Tribal Access to Clean Water Act, S. 2385 and H.R. 4746, which will provide badly needed technical assistance, capacity, and resources to address the inequity in access to clean water for Tribes.

Access to clean water is a basic human right. Clean water is foundational for human health, growing economies, and a minimum level of support for communities. However, 48 percent of households on Native American reservations do not have clean water or adequate sanitation. Native American homes are 19 times more likely than white households to lack indoor plumbing.

Funding for safe drinking water systems for Tribal communities received a significant boost from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and the Inflation Reduction Act. While groundbreaking and long overdue, the funding now available for construction and repair of domestic water systems in Indian country is not a complete solution. Technical assistance is needed to allow Tribes to plan and design the systems necessary to access clean drinking water and bring those plans to the “shovel ready” stage where they can take advantage of the newly available construction funding. In addition, Tribes need support to develop the managerial, financial, and regulatory capacity required



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for a fully functional and self-sustaining utility. Finally, because Tribes cannot rely on the same types and volumes of revenue streams to support operation and maintenance (O&M) of water systems, O&M assistance helps to ensure that the benefits of the historic investment in infrastructure are fully realized.

The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act of 2023 would address these gaps and advance the Federal Government's treaty and trust obligations to provide clean and accessible water for Native communities. We strongly support swift passage of The Tribal Access to Clean Water Act.

Sincerely,

Heather Tanana
Initiative Lead
Universal Access to Clean Water

Cindy Lowry
Executive Director
Alabama Rivers Alliance

Colton Fagundes
Policy Director
American Sustainable Business Network

Harriet Festing
Executive Director
Anthropocene Alliance

Beth K. Stewart
Executive Director
Cahaba River Society

Tracy Kolian
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Children's Environmental Health Network

Sean Jackson
National Water Campaigns Organizer
Clean Water Action



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Senior Legislative Counsel
Earthjustice

Ann Mesnikoff
Federal Legislative Director
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Val Schull
Water Equity and Ocean Program Director
GreenLatinos

Alicia Vasto
Water Program Director
Iowa Environmental Council

Laura Gregory
Watershed Program Director
Kentucky Waterways Alliance

Lizzy Duncan
Government Affairs Representative, Healthy Communities
League of Conservation Voters

Cynthia Robertson
Executive Director
Micah Six Eight Mission

Wendy Weaver
Executive Director
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National Director, Tribal Partnerships
National Wildlife Federation

Rebecca Hammer
Deputy Director of Federal Water Policy
Natural Resources Defense Council



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