

Metropolitan Planning Council

July 2, 2019

Office of Governor J.B. Pritzker
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

The Metropolitan Planning Council has long advocated for enhancing the capacity of our local governments to serve Illinois residents better. To build this technical capacity, we ask you to sign HB2650, which will help low capacity communities maintain their water infrastructure.

When communities need help paying for water infrastructure repair, they often turn to an important federal program administered by the State of Illinois: the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (SRF). Unfortunately, some low-income communities have trouble accessing this fund.

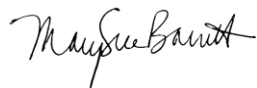
That means maintenance and improvements fall further and further behind in these communities. Illinois needs a way to deliver more of the benefits of SRF to households living in low-capacity communities.

HB2650 (Rep. Robert Rita, D-Blue Island) addresses this problem by expanding access to SRF funding. The bill creates a 5 year pilot program, during which time IEPA must use a portion of the SRF to prioritize technical assistance to low-capacity water systems. Technical assistance can include things like water rate studies, preliminary engineering, staff training, lead service line inventory and remediation, and studies of efficiency measures like regional partnerships.

IEPA was consulted extensively in the development of this bill, and MPC will continue to provide feedback to ensure the pilot works for those communities that most need the assistance.

HB2650 will help low-income communities gain access to an essential water infrastructure improvement program. Moreover, the bill is budget neutral. Given its strong benefits, its unanimous passage through both houses, and its enthusiastic support from the relevant state agency, we hope that you will sign this bill without delay. We welcome the opportunity to discuss this further, and we thank you for the opportunity to weigh in and to partner with your administration.

Sincerely yours,



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