



Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2008

The Honorable David M. Walker
Comptroller General
U.S. Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, DC 20548

Dear Mr. Walker:

We write to request that Government Accountability Office ("GAO") undertake a study of potential funding mechanisms and revenue sources available to establish a Clean Water Trust Fund.

Our nation's water infrastructure needs have grown while funding for clean water has been declining. Many wastewater treatment systems are nearing the end of their useful design lives. The GAO, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the Congressional Budget Office, and the Water Infrastructure Network have estimated that the nation faces a growing water infrastructure funding gap of between \$300-500 billion over the next 20 years between what is currently being spent and what must be spent in order to maintain and upgrade our aging water infrastructure. The creation of a dedicated source of funding is necessary to ensure that our communities have adequate funding to address current and future water infrastructure needs.

As a better partner to local communities, the federal government should increase its investment in the repair and replacement of wastewater treatment and sewer-collection systems. A Clean Water Trust Fund would provide a deficit-neutral, sustainable, and long-term federal contribution to protecting existing water resources at the lowest possible cost.

In order to determine the appropriate funding mechanism for such a trust fund, we request your assistance in analyzing potential revenue source options that can be efficiently collected, are broad based, equitable, and that support annual funding levels of at least \$10 billion.

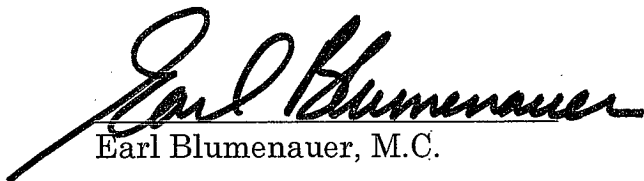
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In conducting the study, we request that the Comptroller General, at a minimum, consult with Federal, State, and local agencies, representatives of business and industry, representatives of entities operating publicly owned treatment works, and other interested groups. It is our desire that this study be completed no later than January 15, 2009.

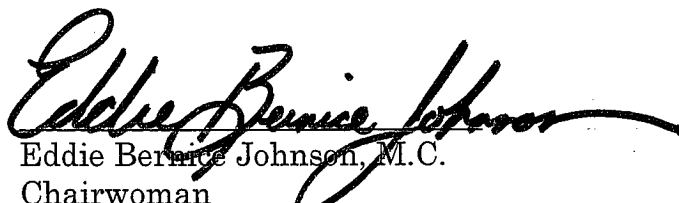
Please contact Janine Benner with Representative Earl Blumenauer at 202 225-4811 and Ryan C. Seiger, with the House Transportation and Infrastructure Subcommittee on Water Resources and Environment at 202-225-0060 to discuss this request and associated reporting timeframes.

Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,


Earl Blumenauer, M.C.


James L. Oberstar, M.C.
Chairman
Committee on Transportation
and Infrastructure


Eddie Bernice Johnson, M.C.
Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Water Resources
and Environment