March 1, 2016

To: Members of the California Congressional Delegation

Dear Representative:

The California Association of Sanitation Agencies (CASA) writes to request that you work with your colleagues to provide a minimum of $2,000,000,000 in fiscal year 2017 to support the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund Program (CWSRF). This funding commitment will allow water quality agencies in our state to initiate vital infrastructure projects that improve water quality and develop water-recycling projects to mitigate the impacts of drought.

The Administration’s fiscal year 2017 budget request for the CWSRF would significantly cut this vital water infrastructure program, creating significant hardships on communities throughout California. We urge you to reject this request. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency recently published the Clean Water Needs Survey. This survey documents that more than $270 billion water quality infrastructure needs exist nationwide, with $26 billion in California alone. It is important to highlight that the identified needs only consider federally eligible projects. Our agencies must address other critical infrastructure and ongoing operations and maintenance demands that increase the funding needs to protect our state’s streams, lakes, rivers, and coastal waters. The decision by the Administration to reduce its commitment to improve our nation’s water quality infrastructure is counterproductive to its stated desire to improve water quality. The increasing number of federal mandates that our agencies must comply with, in addition to the burdens of maintaining the existing water quality infrastructure, makes funding of the CWSRF at $2 billion imperative.

Since 1987, when the CWSRF was first authorized, the federal government has served as an important partner with local and state agencies to support meaningful assistance in addressing our nation’s water and wastewater infrastructure needs. Unfortunately, over the past several years, this partnership has been stressed to an unreasonable degree as appropriations reductions in the CWSRF have resulted in exacerbating the fiscal pressures that local communities must bear in protecting the public’s health. The priority to protect our nation’s waters and public health must be addressed through a robust federal partnership. Again, we urge that you fund the CWSRF program at $2,000,000,000 in fiscal year 2017.

Sincerely,

Roberta L. Larson
Executive Director