

February 24, 2014

The Honorable Ken Calvert, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee Subcommittee on
Interior, Environment and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: National Ground Water Monitoring Network Funding – FY 2015

Dear Chairman Calvert:

The following organizations strongly support funding for the National Ground Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN) as part of the FY 2015 Interior Appropriations bill. With groundwater providing nearly half of the nation's drinking water and more than 40 percent of irrigation water, our nation's economy, security, and the public's well-being depend on knowing the status and trends of this vital resource.

The current organizational structures for collecting national groundwater data have serious limitations. The authors of the 2008 U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Circular 1323 acknowledge these limitations which include: lack of national coverage; inadequate periods of record; and inconsistency in measurement frequency. These limitations can result in understating and/or overstating problems such as declining groundwater levels in major water supply aquifers.

In attempting to address these limitations, Congress authorized the NGWMN as part of the SECURE Water Act, (Public Law 111-11 Omnibus Public Land Management Act) in 2009. Envisioned as a cooperative venture among federal agencies, states, regional water authorities, and tribes, the NGWMN would function as an integrated system of data collection and reporting and would provide the necessary data to more accurately monitor the nation's groundwater resources.

Six states—Montana, Illinois, Indiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, and Texas—pilot tested concepts for a national network and found that a cooperative, collaborative NGWMN (cost shared by both state and federal resources) with the data made available through an internet portal is workable.

We, therefore, request that you include \$2.5 million in the USGS Groundwater Resources budget for NGWMN support, as well as the following report language:

Within Water Resources, the bill includes an increase of \$2,500,000 for a groundwater monitoring network, as requested. The Committee intends these funds to be used to provide cost-share grants to states to upgrade monitoring networks to national standards and to incorporate wells into the network. The

funding will also support the additional work by the USGS to manage the network and provide data access through an internet web portal.

Please contact Chris Reimer (creimer@ngwa.org, 800.551.7379 ext. 560) should you or a member of your staff have questions. Thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Association of American State Geologists
American Geosciences Institute
American Geophysical Union
American Ground Water Trust
American Society of Civil Engineers
American Water Resources Association
American Water Works Association
Association of Metropolitan Water Agencies
Colorado Ground Water Association
Colorado Water Well Contractors Association
Geological Society of America
Ground Water Protection Council
Groundwater Resources Association of California
Illinois Association of Groundwater Professionals
Indiana Ground Water Association
International Association of Hydrogeologists/US National Chapter
Irrigation Association
Massachusetts Ground Water Association
Michigan Ground Water Association
Minnesota Ground Water Association
Minnesota Water Well Association
National Ground Water Association
Nebraska Well Drillers Association
New Jersey Ground Water Association
New Mexico Ground Water Association
North Carolina Ground Water Association
Tennessee Water Well Association
Texas Ground Water Association
Water Quality Association
Water Systems Council

Cc: House Interior Appropriations Subcommittee Members