

Statement of Wayne Morgan Before the Senate Committee on Environmental and Public Works  
Hearing on “Identifying the Unique Challenges that Small, Disadvantaged, and Rural  
Communities Face in Accessing and Maintaining Drinking Water and Wastewater Treatment  
Services, Including Infrastructure Assistance, Through the Various Clean Water and Drinking  
Water Programs Administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency”

October 14, 2021

Good morning Chairman Carper, Ranking Member Capito and members of the Committee.  
Thank you for the opportunity to discuss our nation’s water and wastewater utilities.

My name is Wayne Morgan, and I am the Executive Director of the West Virginia (WV) Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC). The IJDC was created in 1994 by the WV Legislature to be WV's funding clearinghouse for water and wastewater projects. My additional credentials include certifications as a professional engineer (WV 8884) and a class IV (highest) public water system operator (WVOP26374). In my 44 years of water and wastewater utility experience, I have spent 26 years in West Virginia, 4 years in Virginia and 14 years in New Jersey at a water and wastewater utility corporate office with operational responsibility for 12 separate state utilities, and during that period (5 years) the U.S. utility was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest utility in the World.

Before beginning, I want to thank the ranking member of the Committee, WV’s Senior Senator, Shelley Moore Capito, for your commitment to, and tremendous work for WV. Also, I would like to thank the Committee Members for your interest in this important topic. These challenges facing our water and wastewater utilities affect every American.

Listed below are the prioritized challenges I want to present/reinforce with the Committee.

1. Infrastructure - Aging Infrastructure is a challenge for most of the water and wastewater utilities in our nation. In many rural areas across our country, there are no current plans to add infrastructure to expand our network of water and wastewater services to citizens. Much of the wastewater infrastructure was constructed in the 1970s with the passage of Clean Water Act in 1972 (and the reason I decided to become a civil/environmental engineer when I went to college). When constructed with up to 75% US EPA grant funding, the lifespan of these systems was 40 to 50 years. Today we are at the end of that lifespan and systems are in need of upgrading. The WV IJDC compiles a Needs Assessment for water and wastewater in WV every three (3) years, which provides details on system upgrades and extensions to customers needing public water/wastewater service. Here is a link to the December 2020 WV IJDC Needs Assessment.

<http://www.wvinfrastructure.com/project-dashboard/pdf/policiesGuidelines/2020%20Needs%20Assessment%20Complete.pdf>

Just like the higher cost of roads in mountainous terrain the cost of water and wastewater systems are higher in states like WV than areas which have rolling or level terrain. The recognition of this issue is needed related to funding projects. The world is facing unprecedented material cost fluctuations that will hopefully become stable again as logistics and demand needs are addressed.

Potential Solution(s) - Increased funding, cost of services pricing, training and regionalization/consolidation are all potential solutions that can be utilized individually or in combination to address the need for upgrading or extending water and wastewater infrastructure.

2. Lack of a workforce replenishment plan – This challenge may be even greater than the need for funding for infrastructure (listed above). Small, rural utilities are particularly impacted by the severe lack of licensed operators and workers, as their operators and workers will move to larger utilities for higher wages. Funding to establish a water and wastewater workforce replenishment plan, and for the on-going training of individuals are desperately needed.

Potential Solution(s) - Increased funding and training are needed to educate the industry including customers, utility workforce and management to address the need for a workforce replenishment plan, and on-going education and training of the workforce at all utilities.

3. Lack of a technology utilization plan – Paired with the workforce utilization plan and integral to the success of both plans is the need for funding to establish a technology utilization plan, and for the on-going training of individuals are desperately needed. The technology utilization plan needs to provide for the consideration of the following.
  - a. Telemetry and SCADA (supervisory control and data acquisition)
  - b. Asset based enterprise customer and financial software system
  - c. GIS (geographic information system) based mapping tied into the enterprise software system including workorder based dispatching to meet asset maintenance/repair and customer demands

Potential Solution(s) - Increased funding and training are needed to educate the industry including customers, utility workforce and management to address the need for a technology utilization plan, and on-going education and training for the workforce at all utilities.

4. Rate affordability-based funding needs to continue so rates become more standard/equitable across the U.S. Challenges to rate affordability are listed below:

- a. Declining population is a challenge for West Virginia and particularly southern WV where we are today. A growing customer base within a customer service area allows the utility to spread its cost over a growing customer base, and permits rate increases to be delayed due to growth.
- b. Mountainous terrain, as previously stated/explained, and or other issues impacting cost of construction across the U.S.
- c. Lack of technology utilization

Potential Solution(s) - Increased funding, gradual increases in rates to achieve cost of services pricing, training and regionalization/consolidation are all potential solutions that can be utilized individually or in combination to address the need for cost-of-service rates.

Thank you for your time and for addressing this important issue.