

**Senator Kevin Cramer (R-ND):** Chairman, Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water and Wildlife  
**Statement for the Record:** “Information-Gathering Process on Draft Legislation entitled, America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 and The Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020: Stakeholder Comments”

Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Carper, thank you for compiling and releasing the draft legislative text for *America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020 (AWIA)* and the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020*. I appreciate the collaborative, bipartisan nature you have fostered on the EPW committee as we construct important legislation like the bills before us today. The draft text and this Information-Gathering Process is an important step to hear stakeholders’ priorities, refinements and concerns. I look forward to reviewing the input we receive through this process.

I have been a fervent supporter of passing a comprehensive infrastructure package into law. We unanimously passed the largest highway bill in history out of committee last year. I was proud to support *America’s Transportation and Infrastructure Act* in support of our nation’s highways and bridges. Our water infrastructure is equally vital and I look forward to quickly moving these proposals through the legislative process. Our constituents understand the importance of infrastructure and are counting on us to get the job done.

As the Chairman of the Fisheries, Water and Wildlife, I appreciate the work put into the Drinking Water Infrastructure Act. This bill places a high priority on rural, underserved areas who need help to safely and regularly access drinking water. It reauthorizes multiple drinking water programs important for North Dakota communities, especially those with small populations in rural areas. In addition, the proposal sets aside specific program funding for North Dakota’s tribal communities to ensure they have access to critical drinking water programs.

America’s Water Infrastructure Act is bipartisan legislation with practical solutions which benefit North Dakotans and Americans across the country. It would create jobs, bolster interstate commerce, protect local communities’ access to safe drinking water, and provide much-needed Congressional oversight and direction for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Western states have a long-fraught relationship with the USACE often feeling neglected, if not completely ignored. Water Resource Development Act provisions are a critical opportunity for Congress to provide necessary oversight and direction to a bureaucracy often run amuck. AWIA contains multiple provisions to transform how the USACE operates and interacts with states and local communities.

As we started to draft this proposal, I reached out to North Dakotans to get their input. I appreciated the feedback and ideas I received from constituents. While not every priority was included, the current proposal provides substantial funding and reforms needed back home. AWIA includes approximately \$17 billion in new federal authorizations. It would increase water storage, provide protection from floodwaters, maintain the navigability of inland waterways, and repair aging wastewater and irrigation systems.

Throughout this process, I have worked closely with North Dakota and other western states seeking to address a long-standing issue with the USACE’s refusal to acknowledge state’s authority. I remain committed to include bipartisan legislation, requiring the USACE to follow

Congressional intent by deferring to state water appropriation rights. Last year, I led a bipartisan group of our colleagues and interested stakeholders to express deep concern over the USACE's proposed Water Supply Rule. Thankfully, President Trump decided to repeal this deeply flawed rule. I am now working with our colleagues, especially western members, to develop bipartisan language to provide a permanent solution. It is unfortunate we could not reach a conclusion to this longstanding issue in time for this initial draft. The USACE needs to follow Congressional intent and respect states' water allocation rights. Western states should not be held hostage by unrelated water wars and special interests, and I will continue pushing for a solution.

Thank you for holding this information gathering session and I look forward to building upon the good work we have done.