



**SPRINGFIELD WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION  
P.O. BOX 995, SPRINGFIELD, MA 01101**

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Contact: Jaimye Bartak  
Communications Manager  
Email: [jaimye.bartak@waterandsewer.org](mailto:jaimye.bartak@waterandsewer.org)

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Executive Director Josh Schimmel Testifies Before U.S. Senate**  
*Discusses Impact of Recent Infrastructure Bills on Water and Wastewater Utilities*

Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) Executive Director Josh Schimmel testified before a subcommittee of the U.S. Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) today about the impacts of the recently passed Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill (BIL) and Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act (DWWIA) on water utilities.

EPW's Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water & Wildlife, chaired by Sen. Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, held a hearing on the "Implementation of the Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Act: Stakeholders' Needs and Experiences" in order to better understand ways Congress can help facilitate the utilization of funding available in the BIL and DWWIA bills. Mr. Schimmel was invited to speak on behalf of the National Association of Clean Water Agencies (NACWA), for which he serves on the Board of Directors. He was joined by Mayor Ras J. Baraka of Newark in providing testimony on topics ranging from affordability to the challenges of emerging contaminants.

Mr. Schimmel testified that funding from the DWWIA and BIL is greatly welcome after decades of Federal under-investment: "The historic water infrastructure investments in DWWIA and BIL offer much needed respite to local governments working to juggle capital funding needs and ongoing operations and maintenance while keeping customer rates manageable." He noted, however, that many water utilities, particularly those serving disadvantaged communities like Springfield, may not have the resources to access this historic funding without additional assistance.

Expanding the reach of Federal water funding programs to more communities was a key topic discussed in the hearing. In 2021, the Commission received a \$250 million competitive, low-interest loan from EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA). Much of the match for the WIFIA funding will come from the Massachusetts Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRF), another low-interest financing source. Utilities that utilize the SRF program are in the best position to receive funding from DWWIA and BIL.

"The combination of WIFIA and SRF loans will accelerate capital investment and save the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission approximately \$80 million in financing costs, which enables the Commission to continue to support residents in need through its customer assistance programs," he said. The Commission's particular rate and management structure have allowed it to compete for these



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loans, but Mr. Schimmel noted that reducing barriers would help diverse utilities of all sizes and abilities access critical funding.

To help expand access to this new Federal funding through the state SRF programs, Mr. Schimmel advocated that more grants, technical assistance, and expanded eligibility are the keys to “lowering the bar” for communities. “Implementing this historic funding will take a huge lift at all levels of government, and with this five-year funding period we have the opportunity to make sure we get it right.”

Mr. Schimmel’s full testimony can be viewed on the EPW’s YouTube page at:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=asLfrtVUJ40>

**About the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission**

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is an independent, regional public utility that provides drinking water and wastewater service to approximately 250,000 people in the lower Pioneer Valley.

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