Dear Speaker Pelosi and Majority Leader Schumer,

The undersigned members of the Clean Water for All Coalition and allied water advocates support using budget reconciliation to provide additional funding for critical, long overdue water infrastructure investments in communities around the country. We ask for your support in ensuring that the investments made by Congress this year in water infrastructure and in disinvested communities struggling with water access and pollution crises are robust enough to finally address these issues. Specifically, between the bipartisan infrastructure deal and reconciliation, we urge you to invest a total of at least $150 billion for drinking water infrastructure (including $45 billion to fully replace all lead service lines), $110 billion for clean water infrastructure, and $90 billion for low-income water assistance and water bill arrears relief over the next ten years. This is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to make whole communities who have borne the brunt of systemic disinvestment.

All people in America should have access to water infrastructure systems that provide safe, clean, and affordable water – systems that protect people’s health, sustain thriving ecosystems, withstand the effects of climate change, and support a robust and diverse workforce. However, far too many communities — particularly Black, Brown, Indigenous, low-income, and rural — have aging and failing infrastructure, polluted water supplies, and unreliable or unaffordable access to safe drinking water and sanitation. Investment is urgently needed: the Environmental Protection Agency estimates that we need to invest at least $470 billion in our drinking water infrastructure and $270 billion in our clean water infrastructure over the next 20 years just to meet basic health and environmental standards.

The Bipartisan Infrastructure bill reauthorized important programs and appropriated some funds which are both important first steps toward dealing with issues like lead in water, emerging contaminants, combined sewer overflows, and failing decentralized wastewater systems. However, the investments from that package do not rise to the scale of the problems our communities face. Those funds are insufficient to prevent another generation of children from growing up with lead poisoning, help the growing number of older wastewater treatment plants that have exceeded their design capacity, meaningfully slow the vast
and increasing quantities of runoff pollution generated by sprawling development and climate change, or ensure low-income households can afford the cost of essential water and sewer services.

We urge you, in your capacity as Congressional leaders, when weighing how to best allocate resources in any reconciliation legislation, to ensure our economy and our ecosystems can work for everyone, to invest significantly in water infrastructure and make a historic commitment to our water and our communities. We must build on the investments of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Deal to support communities across the country, both rural and urban, and especially low-income communities of color.

Sincerely,

[Signature with list of organizations]
Passaic River Coalition
Pennsylvania Council of Churches
People's Water Board Coalition
Puget Soundkeeper Alliance
Raritan Baykeeper, Inc (dba NY/NJ Baykeeper)
River Network
Riverview Neighborhood Association
Save Our wild Salmon Coalition
Sierra Club
Southern Environmental Law Center

Surfrider Foundation
The Alliance for the Great Lakes
The Center for Water Security and Cooperation
The Water Collaborative of Greater New Orleans
Vermont Natural Resources Council
Vets United to Stop the Wall
Virginia League of Conservation Voters
Washington Environmental Council and Washington Conservation Voters
WaterNow Alliance

Clean Water for All is a broad coalition of organizations who, working together with our partners, aim to elevate the importance of national safe and affordable clean water policies that support healthy communities, healthy ecosystems, cultural resources, and wildlife.

CC:

The Honorable Tom Carper, Chair, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee
The Honorable Tammy Duckworth, Chair, Senate EPW Subcommittee on Fisheries, Water, and Wildlife
The Honorable Bernie Sanders, Chair, Senate Budget Committee
The Honorable John Yarmouth, Chair, House Budget Committee
The Honorable Peter DeFazio, Chair, House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
The Honorable Frank Pallone, Chair, House Energy and Commerce Committee