

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 24, 2026

The Honorable Sam Graves  
Chair  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rick Larsen  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Transportation & Infrastructure  
United States House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Graves and Ranking Member Larsen:

As Members of Congress from Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia, we write to urge the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure (Committee) to take urgent action to repair and modernize the Potomac Interceptor, a major regional wastewater conveyance pipeline for D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Since January 19<sup>th</sup>, and escalating since February 7<sup>th</sup>, a failure in the pipeline has resulted in nearly 250 million gallons of sewage spilling into the Potomac River,<sup>1</sup> creating serious environmental and health concerns for our constituents.

We have been closely monitoring the spill since it occurred, and are thankful that local partners and governments have already taken steps to manage its most immediate impacts and have remained in regular communication with our offices. The University of Maryland and local partners like Potomac Riverkeepers have monitored water quality and provided consistent public updates. The Maryland Department of the Environment, the Maryland Department of Health, the Virginia Department of Health, and the D.C. Department of Energy & Environment, have all issued public notices or advisories to inform the public about the quality of the river. Meanwhile, D.C. Water has implemented emergency measures to prevent sewage from further spilling into the Potomac River while it installs medium- and long-term repairs. While those repairs will take time and cannot reverse the environmental and health impacts of the spill, they are essential steps toward ending this crisis.

Now, Congress must play a role in solving this crisis, investing in our nation's wastewater infrastructure, and preventing this and similar crises from recurring. The failure of the Potomac Interceptor is an acute crisis for our region, but its failure was caused by the same aging infrastructure that exists across the country. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has stated that "our water infrastructure is aging and in need of repair to withstand the challenges of the 21st century."<sup>2</sup> EPA's most recent Clean Watersheds Needs Survey found that our wastewater infrastructure will require more than \$630 billion in repairs and updates over the next two decades, far outpacing local and state capacity.<sup>3</sup> Like other infrastructure included in that survey, the Potomac Interceptor's age made it vulnerable to failure. The conduit, which runs

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<sup>1</sup> [DC Water Releases Key Findings on Extent of Sewer Overflow and Potomac River Impact | DC Water](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Water Infrastructure | EPA](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Clean Watersheds Needs Survey | EPA](#)

from Virginia and Maryland to D.C. Water's Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant, opened in 1964—more than 60 years ago.<sup>4</sup>

We therefore request that the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure urgently act to repair the Potomac Interceptor. We also ask that you fully authorize and fund federal programs that prevent these crises for our region and others nationwide. Specifically, we request that the Committee:

1. Reauthorize, and increase authorized funding levels, for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF). The CWSRF was specifically designed by Congress to help states and localities repair and modernize wastewater infrastructure like the Potomac Interceptor. Reauthorizing this program at or above the levels set in the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is essential to enabling communities across the country to avoid wastewater spills and other crises.
2. Authorize specific funding to rehabilitate and modernize the Potomac Interceptor. Unlike other water systems nationwide, the Washington region's system includes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) as a major infrastructure owner and manager. As the Committee prepares the biennial updates to USACE's funding priorities and projects as part of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), we ask that you authorize urgent funding for comprehensive rehabilitation and modernization of the Potomac Interceptor. That funding will allow for structural repairs, pipe lining, ventilation improvements, access structure replacement, odor and corrosion control upgrades, and modernization of monitoring systems.
3. As part of WRDA 2026, direct USACE to prioritize the execution of the comprehensive study on a backup water supply for the Washington region required by section 8201(a) (14) of WRDA 2022 as modified by section 1351 of WRDA 2024. Unlike other major metropolitan areas, the region lacks a secondary water supply, which would provide critical redundancy in the event of a future crisis. The region cannot afford a delay in identifying that second source or a narrowing of the study to focus only on near-term or small-scale measures.

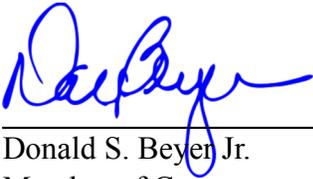
These steps are essential to respond to the devastating sewage spill from the Potomac Interceptor, and to spare other communities from facing similar crises in the future, which will inevitably occur without immediate investments in our nation's water infrastructure. To deliver those investments, we also ask the Appropriations Committee's subcommittees on Energy and Water Development, and on Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies, to fully fund the CWSRF and authorized Potomac Interceptor repairs as they prepare Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations bills.

On behalf of the communities facing the most severe impacts from the failure of the Potomac Interceptor, we thank you for your attention to this urgent issue. We are willing and prepared to work with the Committee to secure real, long-term solutions to our region's, and our country's, wastewater infrastructure issues.

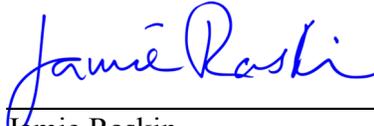
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<sup>4</sup> [Potomac Timeline | Interstate Commission on the Potomac River Basin](#)

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



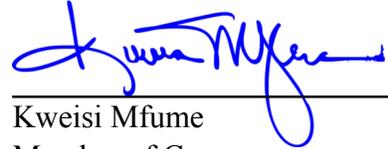
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer  
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress



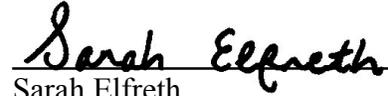
Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



Glenn F. Ivey  
Member of Congress



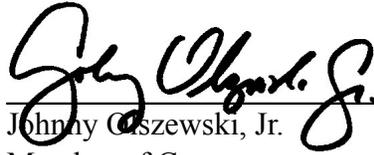
Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



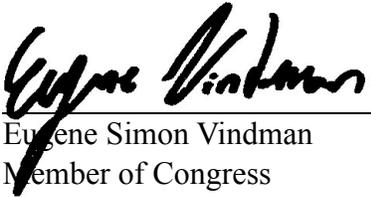
April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress



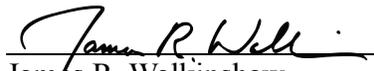
Johnny Ciszewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Suhas Subramanyam  
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Eugene Simon Vindman  
Member of Congress



James R. Walkinshaw  
Member of Congress