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March 13, 2014

Congressman Ken Calvert, Chairman
Congressman James P. Moran, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Subcommittee on Interior, Environment & Related Agencies
2363 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Regarding: WATER DATA & SCIENCE PROGRAM FUNDING

Interior Department Appropriations for FY-2015

Dear Congressman Calvert and Congressman Moran:

I urge your support to enable the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) to fully implement its design for the **National Streamflow Information Program (NSIP)** beginning in FY-2015 and to restore the USGS capacity to fully match non-federal cost-share investments in the **Cooperative Water Program (CWP)**.

We, at the Great Lakes Observing System and decision makers in the Great Lakes Basin, rely on the water data and science that these two USGS programs produce. America's need for streamflow, groundwater, tidal surge, precipitation and water quality data increases every year in relation to our public safety, land use and economic development needs, and our infrastructure planning and ecological commitments magnify those needs. Unfortunately, the Interior/USGS budgets for the NSIP and CWP have not kept up with our nation's needs – or with the approximately \$80 million contributed annually by over 800 Cooperators to maintain USGS streamgages).

Together, the NSIP and CWP serve the federal need and provide the benchmark for an integrated monitoring network and a proven source of reliable scientific information that we need to support well-informed decision making in both the public and private sectors across a wide variety of water resource planning, design and operational functions, such as monitoring compliance with federal compact and Native American trust responsibilities; designing bridges, dams, levees, and other infrastructure; forecasting storm surge, flood and drought conditions and issuing emergency advisories; identifying flood-prone areas to protect lives and property and reduce disaster relief expenses; monitoring and protecting water quality, fisheries, wetlands and endangered species; providing safety information for boating and other water-based recreation; analyzing climate trends and evaluating community and regional response options; and projecting future water needs and availability for agricultural, municipal and industrial uses.

In the face of repeated storm damage, flooding and drought impacts, reliable data and science have never been more essential in protecting our communities, businesses and infrastructure investments. Full implementation of these programs is a reasonable federal investment in the data and science needed to support the full set of federal responsibilities while reducing disaster impacts, enhancing the sustainability of our communities, our economies and our ecosystems.

Please contact me or Peter Evans at the Interstate Council on Water Policy (phe@riverswork.com or 703-243-7383) with any questions.

Sincerely,

Jennifer Read
Executive Director