

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Scott Pruitt
United States Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

The Honorable Jeff Sessions
United States Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530

May 11, 2018

Dear Administrator Pruitt and Attorney General Sessions:

We are writing to express our strong support for modification of the Kansas City's sewer overflow control program (OCP) and implementation of the federal consent decree. The OCP is the largest public works project in the City's history – one that may impose costs over the program operation on the order of \$20,000 or greater per household.

Over the course of 150 years, Kansas City's sewer infrastructure was built as the City grew, with combined sewers and then separate storm and sanitary systems; some of that original infrastructure is still in use today. The EPA and Kansas City cooperatively developed the OCP to meet regulatory requirements for reducing overflows from both the combined and sanitary sewer systems. Since the program started, Kansas City has worked to comply with the schedule and requirements of the consent decree.

To comply with the consent decree Kansas City has raised local sewer rates, averaging double digit increases, every year since the decree was entered. Such rate increases cannot continue indefinitely. Kansas City has used these rate increases to make considerable progress, and its program has become a model for communities nationwide. Unfortunately, the economic impact of the skyrocketing water and sewer rates on residents, especially low-income residents, has become alarming. The implementation of the current plan and the subsequent rate increases have moved a majority of residents beyond EPA's two percent of median household income affordability threshold. These rate increases have hit renters and low income families particularly hard. If the current plan is implemented to conclusion, and without substantial and thoughtful modification, sewer rates – independent from the cost of drinking water – are likely to exceed 20% of median household income for the most vulnerable of Kansas City's population.

Additionally the sheer magnitude, complexity, and cost of the program has caused the loss of two of the City's key regional partners - Johnson County, Kansas and the City of Liberty,

Missouri. This blow to regionalization imposes even greater financial impacts on remaining City ratepayers – impacts that were not contemplated when the consent decree was originally issued.

Given the increasing economic burden, the loss of regional partners, and Kansas City's consistent efforts to achieve the requirements of the consent decree we ask that your offices continue to work with Kansas City to modify the OCP. A modification should focus on meeting the City's environmental goals while managing the economic burden on City residents, preventing the loss of any of the City's other regional sewer partners, and be adaptive so City residents will receive the greatest possible benefits in return for the significant wastewater rates they will have to pay over the next several decades.

We stand ready to assist with the development of a modified OCP and consent decree. We ask that you continue to keep us updated as this initiative progresses.

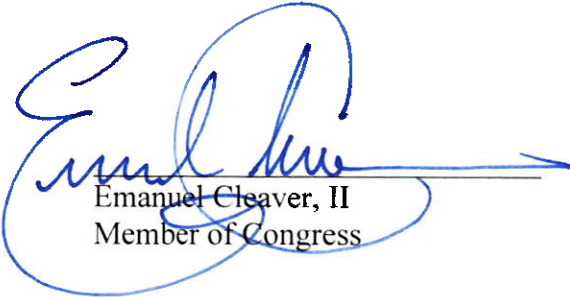
Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Claire McCaskill".

Claire McCaskill
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Roy Blunt".

Roy Blunt
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Emanuel Cleaver, II".

Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress