



COMMITTEE ON  
**ENERGY & COMMERCE**  
**DEMOCRATS**  
RANKING MEMBER FRANK PALLONE, JR.

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Pallone Statement at Subcommittee Markup of Safe Drinking Water Act**

*"I look forward to continuing to work with Chairman Shimkus and Chairman Walden to produce a strong bipartisan bill that we can all support."*

**Washington, D.C.** – *Energy and Commerce Ranking Member Frank Pallone, Jr. (D-NJ) delivered the following opening remarks at an Environment Subcommittee markup of the, "Drinking Water System Improvement Act."*

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. The safety of our drinking water is an incredibly important topic which touches all of our constituents. I welcome this markup and the bipartisan work that has gone into it.

Safe and clean drinking water is a basic necessity for everyone. And yet the Safe Drinking Water Act has not been reauthorized for 20 years. I'm extremely hopeful that is going to change this year beginning today with this subcommittee markup.

When we held a legislative hearing on this discussion draft in May, there was general consensus that we needed a bipartisan effort to reauthorize the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, or SRF. I am pleased that you have responded by working with us to improve this bill, and that you have pledged to keep working with us as the bill moves forward.

At the legislative hearing I pointed out a number of concerns I had with the old discussion draft. Today, I'm pleased to say that progress has been made in addressing many of those concerns.

In May, I said that the draft did nothing to address the growing problem of lead in drinking water in homes and schools. I am proud to say that bipartisan amendments that will be offered today will put in place provisions to quantify and reduce the risks from lead exposure at home and in schools.

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In May, I voiced concern that the draft did nothing to improve transparency and restore consumer confidence in our tap water. I am pleased to say that we have a commitment to address those issues as we move forward.

I also pointed out that the discussion draft did not commit to increasing funding, but the bill before us today does include increased funds. It is not as much funding as I would like to see, but it is an increase over current authorizations, which is an improvement.

As the bill moves forward, I expect that it will be further strengthened to address drinking water security issues and incentives for restructuring. I look forward to continuing to work with Chairman Shimkus and Chairman Walden to produce a strong bipartisan bill that we can all support. We've worked together to strengthen this bill, and I'm hopeful that cooperation will continue as we prepare to move to full committee.

I do want to note that there are important drinking water issues that are unlikely to be addressed in this bill. Specifically, there does not seem to be bipartisan appetite to strengthen the regulatory process under the Safe Drinking Water Act. The process does not work, and its failure puts public health at risk. I wish we could do more here to improve the standard setting process and protect public health from new and emerging contaminants.

Nevertheless, I'm confident that we are well on our way to producing a strong bipartisan bill that will address many of our drinking water challenges.

I want to thank Ranking Member Tonko for being such a passionate and effective advocate for drinking water infrastructure for years. And I want to acknowledge all of the Democratic members of this Subcommittee who have who have worked tirelessly to highlight the need for drinking water legislation.

Safe drinking water should not be a partisan issue, and I am glad that today, it won't be. This is very important legislation, and I look forward to supporting it.

I yield back.

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