

## CLEAN WATER FOR ALL

### The Problem

Hand washing is an essential part of preventing the spread of COVID-19. Yet, amid the COVID crisis, access to clean running water is out of reach for millions of families. Even before the crisis, an estimated 15 million people had experienced water shutoffs. Now, as unemployment persists and people struggle to pay utility bills, utilities are actually shutting off people's water — during a public health crisis. Meanwhile, far too many communities still do not have access to clean drinking water. In nearly 3,000 communities, lead poisoning is more than twice as severe as in Flint, Michigan. For many, that's due to toxic water from lead pipes. In addition, in cities across the country, major storms — which are intensifying with climate change — are causing destructive flooding, sewage overflows, and toxic runoff, due to old and overburdened wastewater systems.

### The Solution

We urgently need to invest in clean water for all. That means halting all water shutoffs and reconnecting all households that have been disconnected from running water. It means replacing lead pipes in homes, schools, and buildings throughout the entire country and removing other water pollutants so that no one has to question whether their tap water is safe to drink. It means replacing wastewater systems to reduce flooding and toxic runoff in hard-hit communities.

### The Jobs

Investments in clean water would provide good jobs for hundreds of thousands of workers. Specifically, Congress should:

- ▶ **Provide over 356,000 jobs to secure clean drinking water:** Congress needs to invest \$45 billion over 10 years in the Reducing Lead in Drinking Water program to replace lead pipes and protect our children and communities from the damaging impacts of toxic lead pollution (this would provide 68,400



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jobs). To further secure clean water for our communities, Congress needs to invest \$100 billion over five years in the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (this would provide 288,000 jobs).

- ▶ **Provide over 59,000 jobs to halt water shutoffs and restore connections:** Congress needs to immediately invest at least \$5 billion to fund emergency relief and a nationwide moratorium on shutoffs of water for the duration of the crisis. This includes funding the costs for utilities to restore and maintain water service for homeowners and renters.
- ▶ **Provide over 56,000 jobs to upgrade wastewater infrastructure:** Congress needs to invest \$6 billion for wastewater infrastructure over the next 18 months to prevent sewage overflows, prevent flooding, and stop runoff pollution.

### And More ...

For a complete list of clean water investments, see economic analysis from the Political Economy Research Institute and Sierra Club's letter to Congress, which outlines specific priorities for a bold stimulus package that puts millions of people back to work to build a healthier, more equitable clean energy economy.