



AMERICAN PUBLIC WORKS ASSOCIATION

Your Comprehensive  
Public Works Resource

[www.apwa.net](http://www.apwa.net)

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February 11, 2021

The Honorable Lisa McClain  
U.S. House of Representatives  
218 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Alan Lowenthal  
U.S. House of Representatives  
108 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

**RE: Protecting Infrastructure and Promoting Environmental Stewardship (PIPES) Act**

Dear Representative McClain and Representative Lowenthal:

The American Public Works Association (APWA) is reaching out to you in regards to your introduction of the Protecting Infrastructure and Promoting Environmental Stewardship (PIPES) Act. We want to thank you for introducing this legislation, which would require the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to develop and enforce standards for the flushability of disposable nonwoven products. This bipartisan, common-sense bill would help prevent damage and costs to water utilities and ratepayers across our nation.

APWA's over 30,000 members play a critical role in providing clean and safe drinking water to their communities which are large and small, urban and rural. Chief among their responsibilities is the planning, design, construction, operation, and maintenance of the following: water supply systems, wastewater treatment systems, stormwater management programs, and drainage and flood control infrastructure, among numerous other public assets. Our members include public works professionals from cities, counties, and special districts, as well as their private sector partners.

APWA's 117th Congress Water Resiliency Policy Priorities highlight the importance of protecting our water systems from both natural and man-made dangers that can impact people, property, and the environment. In our priorities, we call for policies and programs to mitigate the impacts of these threats as a critical step towards developing water resilient communities.

Disposable nonwoven products represent an increasing source of disruption and expense for wastewater systems, causing costly sewer backups and requiring extensive removal efforts. For Charleston, South Carolina alone, Charleston Water System estimated in December 2021 that it spends over \$300,000 a year on operating expenses for flushable wipe removal – a 200 percent increase from estimated costs in 2018. Similar statistics have been reported by utilities across the nation.

PRESIDENT  
Stan Brown, P.E., PWLF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Scott D. Grayson, CAE



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Public works professionals will soon begin utilizing increased federal assistance from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, P.L. 117-58, to overhaul aging wastewater infrastructure across the country. Unnecessary repair expenses will only hamper this effort by diverting funds that would be better spent on improving critical infrastructure. The PIPES Act would be a significant step to address this issue by establishing clear, enforceable standards for flushability.

On behalf of public works professionals throughout the U.S., we thank you for your work on this critical legislation and for your efforts to establish flushability standards. We are committed to working with your offices in our common goal of protecting our water systems. If you have any questions, please contact APWA Government Affairs Manager Michael Altman at [maltman@apwa.net](mailto:maltman@apwa.net) or (202) 218-6727.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Scott D. Grayson', written over a horizontal line.

Scott D. Grayson, CAE  
Chief Executive Officer

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stan Brown', written over a horizontal line.

Stan Brown, PE  
APWA President

PRESIDENT  
Stan Brown, P.E., PWLF

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER  
Scott D. Grayson, CAE