

SENATOR CASEY RESPONDS TO MS4 QUESTIONS.

From: Senator Robert P. Casey, Jr. <senator@casey.senate.gov>

Sent: Thursday, December 10, 2020 3:47 PM

Subject: Response from Senator Casey

Dear Mr. Steinmeier:

Thank you for taking the time to contact me about stormwater fees. I appreciate hearing from you about this issue.

On December 29, 2010, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) established a Chesapeake Bay Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), requiring six states, including Pennsylvania, and the District of Columbia, to develop plans to meet pollutant reduction targets to restore the health of the Chesapeake Bay. Although Pennsylvania does not border the Bay, Pennsylvania's watersheds contribute more than half of the fresh water flowing to the Chesapeake Bay. For this reason, activities that take place in our state have profound effects on the health of the Bay. Especially damaging is the introduction of nitrogen and phosphorus into the water caused, in part, by agricultural operations and sewage treatment facilities.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) developed Chesapeake Watershed Implementation Plans (WIPs) to outline strategies to reduce pollution in the Chesapeake Bay by 2025. Among other measures, DEP established permit conditions for municipal storm sewer systems, which requires them to remove a certain level of pollutants from their stormwater discharges.

Municipalities across the Commonwealth are utilizing different strategies to finance pollutant reduction efforts to meet DEP permit requirements. Some municipalities are using general funds, while others are charging flat fees. Others have begun charging a stormwater fee based upon impervious areas on all properties within their jurisdictions. I have heard from many Pennsylvanians expressing concern about the cost of stormwater fees, particularly because of their impact on households with limited or fixed incomes. Neither the DEP nor the EPA mandate the charging of stormwater fees to finance compliance efforts.

Municipal water systems are working hard to meet the needs of their communities and to comply with state and federal clean water targets. Still, I understand the challenges faced by towns across Pennsylvania confronted with costly upgrades to these water systems, which is why I will continue to support continued federal investment in projects that will improve local water infrastructure. As your U.S. Senator, I have supported programs like the Clean Water and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, which provide low-interest federal loans and grants to assist communities in making vital improvements to their water systems. In Fiscal Year (FY) 2019, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund received \$1.694 billion in funding, an increase of 21 percent from FY 2018. In 2018, Pennsylvania was allocated \$64 million of these funds. In addition, the EPA's Chesapeake Bay Program has been critical in providing grants to states and municipalities to implement pollutant reduction projects. The Chesapeake Bay Program received \$73 million for FY 2019. On June 25, 2019, I sent a letter to urge Senate

Appropriators to increase funding to \$85 million for the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Program for FY 2020, including \$24 million for nutrient and sediment removal grants, small watershed grants to control polluted runoff and for state-based implementation plans. These grants will aid in offsetting costs of stormwater infrastructure improvements and help localities meet federal mandates as they restore the Chesapeake Bay.

Keeping our Nation's waters free of harmful pollutants is a responsibility we all must share. As Pennsylvania continues to rise to the challenge of meeting the requirements outlined in the Chesapeake Bay TMDL, please be assured that I will work with my colleagues in the Senate to identify ways that the federal government can help the region's water and wastewater treatment facilities move forward on this critical work. Congress has begun the negotiations process for Fiscal Year 2020. Although I am not a member of the U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations, please be assured that I am sharing my priorities with the Committee and following its actions closely as it works to develop appropriations bills. I am committed to supporting the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds and will work to ensure that they receive an appropriate level of funding.

As always, I appreciate your views, thoughts and concerns as they assist me in understanding what is important to the people of Pennsylvania. Please do not hesitate to contact me in the future about this or any other matter of importance to you.

For more information on this or other issues, I encourage you to visit my website, <http://casey.senate.gov>. I hope you will find this online office a comprehensive resource to stay up-to-date on my work in Washington, request assistance from my office or share with me your thoughts on the issues that matter most to you and to Pennsylvania.

Sincerely,
Bob Casey
United States Senator