

For Immediate Release

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NARUC
National Association of Regulatory
Utility Commissioners

NARUC Urges Senate and House Appropriators to Continue Funding for the Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program

Action is Needed this Year to Continue to Help Our Most Vulnerable Citizens

WASHINGTON (April 13, 2023) — The National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners is asking Congress to continue protecting the needs of vulnerable communities through the [Low Income Household Water Assistance Program. Known as LIHWAP, the program](#) provides vital assistance to low-income families to ensure access to affordable water utility services and is set to expire this year.

Fiscal Year 2024 federal budget priorities and the debt limit debate are looming on Capitol Hill. In 2021, Congress provided [\\$1.138 billion to establish LIHWAP](#) to assist customers struggling to pay their bills as a result of COVID-19 and the economic turmoil that followed. As the first federal program to assist low-income families with their water and wastewater bills, LIHWAP has been a success, aiding more than [430,000 households](#). The pandemic's impact on the income of a large swath of Americans and its focus on sanitation, highlighted a problem that had always been present in low-income communities.

"Access to clean and safe drinking water is essential for every person's daily living, sanitation and ability to function in the economy. The lack of running water makes a dwelling uninhabitable; therefore, any lapse in LIHWAP funding is a serious problem," said NARUC President Michael Caron, of the Connecticut Public Utilities Regulatory Authority. "There is no question that any interruption in funding will cause Americans to suffer."

"After advocating for this type of targeted customer assistance for years, NARUC was very pleased to see this program finally introduced in 2021. Federal and state agencies worked incredibly hard to stand up the program and the results seem to speak for themselves in regard to showing need and demonstrating impact," said NARUC Committee on Water Chair Jeff Hughes, a commissioner with the North Carolina Utilities Commission. "Right now — with high inflation making the day-to-day of low income families so difficult — is not the time to let the program lapse."

NARUC has a history of advocacy focused on the federal low-income water program. Most recently, last November, NARUC passed a [Resolution Calling for Permanent Annual Federal Funding for a Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program](#).

The letter is available on NARUC's website [here](#).

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About NARUC

NARUC is a non-profit organization founded in 1889 whose members include the governmental agencies that are engaged in the regulation of utilities and carriers in the fifty states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands. NARUC's member agencies regulate telecommunications, energy, and water utilities. NARUC represents the interests of state public utility commissions before the three branches of the federal government.