THE UNITED STATES CONFERENCE OF MAYORS

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Dear President Obama, Members of the Senate, and Members of the House of Representatives:

In recognition of the role of America's cities in providing basic services, The United States Conference of Mayors has made developing healthy, safe, affordable, and modern water and wastewater systems an integral part of its 2016 agenda. In late 2015 and early 2016, one of our own was confronted with an unprecedented challenge when toxic drinking water was discovered in the City of Flint. While the exact progression of events is still under investigation, it is clear that switching to the Flint River water and subsequent lack of proper treatment of that water led to the corrosion of lead pipes and potential exposure to the deadly bacteria Legionella in the city's water system.

As this crisis has unfolded, the leadership of The United States Conference of Mayors has worked closely with Flint Mayor Karen Weaver to determine what her city needs to emerge stronger and healthier. Mayor Weaver was elected in November 2015 on the platform of acknowledging and fixing the water crisis, and she is one of the only government officials who still holds the trust of the people of Flint. Mayor Weaver was with us during our Winter Meeting in January and at our Leadership Meeting in February. In early February, we dispatched a fact-finding mission of leadership and experts to Flint. And we stood with Mayor Weaver when she appeared before a House hearing on February 10.

As mayors, we believe that federal action is critical to Flint's recovery from this man-made disaster:

- America's drinking water is the cleanest and safest in the world, but the people of Flint have lost confidence in their water due to the corrosion of lead service lines by improperly treated water. To alleviate this situation, the City of Flint needs immediate funding to replace the lead service lines throughout its water system.

- Because of the toxic water the citizens of Flint have consumed over the past two years, the city will need significant assistance in the form of resources and technical support to build a model public health system capable of assessing, monitoring, and addressing the short term and long term impact of lead exposure particularly with regard the children. The children of Flint will need long-term wrap-around support services in the areas of nutrition/food access, early education and behavioral services as well as medical/health services to mitigate the potential long-term impact of this toxic exposure.

- In that Flint was already economically disadvantaged and this crisis has caused many more businesses and residents to leave town, we believe that federal economic development funding is necessary for the city and its residents to meet their full potential.

- While all levels of government must be involved in creating the solution to this problem, for the solution to have the trust of the people of Flint and for it to fully economically benefit those people, federal funds must be directed to the City of Flint.

Thank you for your consideration of our views. As mayors, we wholeheartedly support our colleague Karen Weaver, and appreciate your efforts to work with her to recover from this disaster and move Flint forward. If you have any questions or would like to do additional follow-up, please contact the Conference of Mayors CEO & Executive Director Tom Cochran (202-293-7330 / tcochran@usmayors.org) or his Water Council team, Assistant Executive Director Judy Sheahan (202-861-6775 / jsheahan@usmayors.org) and Dr. Richard Anderson (202-861-6795 / randerson@usmayors.org).

Sincerely,

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