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The Honorable Daryl Metcalfe
Chairman, House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
144 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2012

Aug. 1, 2022

The Honorable Greg Vitali
Democratic Chair, House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee
30 East Wing
Harrisburg, PA 17120-2166

Dear Chairman Metcalfe and Chairman Vitali,

As your committee meets this week to hear perspectives regarding SB 597, I respectfully submit the following comments on behalf of the PA Chamber in support of this legislation. The PA Chamber, the state's largest, broad-based business advocacy organization, represents more than 9,000 member companies of all sizes across all commercial and industrial sectors. A well-maintained and adequately funded infrastructure system is vital to the health and growth of Pennsylvania's economy. The Commonwealth's network of water, sewer, stormwater, gas, electric, and telecommunications and broadband infrastructure are necessary to protect the public health, power our economy and allow for the safe, reliable flow of information and ideas. Together, these networks provide accessibility to growth and opportunity.

With respect to water infrastructure, the PA Chamber supports an adequately funded system of water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure and supports efforts for state and local governments to work together and with private industry in an innovative manner to reduce system costs. To improve the health, safety and economic development in the Commonwealth, the PA Chamber also supports removing legislative and regulatory barriers that impede private investment in the Commonwealth's aged water and wastewater systems. We also support policies that encourage public-private partnerships between government and private industry.

It is our position that SB 597 advances these goals by ensuring water systems in the state are being appropriately managed and maintained. With respect to concerns about potential ratepayer impacts to secure compliance with the proposed requirements, we would respectfully point to the recently enacted state budget, which directed hundreds of millions of dollars in funding for local water projects to be managed through various state programs include DEP, DCNR and PennVEST. The PA Chamber supported passage of the federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which will continue to direct additional funding for infrastructure to the state, including for water system upgrades, over the next five years.

Thank you for your consideration of our position in support of this legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kevin Sunday", written in a cursive style.

Kevin Sunday
Director, Government Affairs

CC: Members of the House Environmental Resources and Energy Committee