

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-1501

April 28, 2022

The Honorable Chellie Pingree
Chair
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Dave Joyce
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Interior,
Environment, & Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Pingree and Ranking Member Joyce:

As you begin crafting the fiscal year 2023 FY23 Interior, Environment, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I respectfully request that you include \$3,500,000 for Maquoketa Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements as a community project funding request through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), State and Tribal Assistance Grants, Certain Water Infrastructure Projects account. The intended recipient is the City of Maquoketa, 201 E. Pleasant Street, Maquoketa, IA 52060.

The City of Maquoketa is in desperate need of an upgraded wastewater facility to promote the health and safety of over 6,000 residents. The city's current wastewater facility is approximately seventy years old and has survived multiple upgrades throughout the years, with the latest being over twenty years ago. It has outlived its estimated lifespan by twenty-five years, creating not only an environmental hazard, but also a heavy financial risk for the economically disadvantaged community.

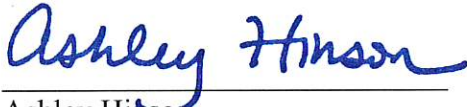
The facility was built in the 1950s to treat the city's wastewater and protect the residents of Maquoketa and the surrounding ecosystems. Currently, given the age of the facility and everchanging government environmental requirements, the facility has fallen out of compliance with Environmental Protection Standards and new standards issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) on wastewater products. If this renovation is not completed in a timely manner, its residents will be forced to pay significantly higher taxes next year to ensure its compliance. This is an especially heavy financial burden for the community, given that over 22 percent of its residents currently live below the poverty line.

The City of Maquoketa and Alliance Water Resources are in the engineering phase to upgrade the wastewater facility and ensure it can comply with the required nutrient-reduction regulations. The city plans to add a new biological basin to remove certain nutrients from wastewater, expand one of the wastewater treatment buildings, and update how the system handles solid waste. About thirty percent of the estimated \$14-15 million of the project has been completed. Now,

Maquoketa is struggling to finance the outstanding facility costs given the unexpected skyrocketing prices of materials and labor caused by inflation, supply chain issues, and other price increases beyond the city's control. Nevertheless, community leaders and its residents remain determined to execute the project successfully, which will undoubtedly ensure the long-term safety and well-being.

The community demonstrates strong support for this project; the City Council unanimously voted in support of the project at multiple meetings and various local businesses have provided letters of support. This investment would save the community from severe financial distress. If Maquoketa does not receive this funding, the city will likely need to raise taxes on a community already struggling with poverty and sustained job loss. Most importantly, it would allow the City of Maquoketa to shift its capital to bolster its main geological and outdoor features, attracting more economic opportunities. I strongly urge the Committee to include this community project funding request in the FY23 Transportation, Housing and Urban Development, & Related Agencies Appropriations bill.

Sincerely,



Ashley Hinson
Member of Congress
Committee on Appropriations