

U.S Congress  
Washington, DC

November 23, 2020

Dear Member of Congress:

As religious leaders representing a diverse spectrum of faith traditions, we believe that water is a gift from God that must be protected and preserved. We understand water as a symbol of purification and cleansing, and many of us use water in religious rituals to signify spiritual rebirth. Materially, water is the fundamental building block of all life and an indispensable human right. As we fight this global pandemic, access to water is vital. Without water, there is no life.

It is urgent that communities have access to water to fight COVID-19. We therefore call for a moratorium on water shutoffs during the pandemic, which will provide assistance for low-income families during this economic crisis caused by COVID-19. Water and wastewater costs represent a higher portion of monthly household expenses for impoverished populations, and all policies of shutoffs for nonpayment must be suspended. Water utility shut offs are an immoral act that would prevent communities and households from following the Center for Disease Control's guidelines on hand washing and would take away drinking water from families struggling to survive.

Additionally, Congress needs to prioritize making infrastructure investments to ensure that everyone in the United States has dependable and safe access to clean water. We must address the ailing condition of water infrastructure in our country.

Our water infrastructure cannot be taken for granted. Much of the drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure that serves our communities has existed for generations. These aging systems easily fall into disrepair – oftentimes so severe that it can lead to contamination, making people sick. Water infrastructure exists to provide communities with safe, clean drinking water and to limit pollution in the streams and rivers that nourish our bodies, local ecosystems, and the whole of God's creation.

The pandemic has opened our eyes to the reality that many vulnerable communities in this country are often forgotten and neglected. All of God's children deserve clean water and a healthy environment, neither of which are possible if their water infrastructure is crumbling or if their water is shutoff completely.

Guided by the moral compasses of our respective faith traditions, in any stimulus package, budget bill or infrastructure legislation, we elevate the calls for a moratorium on all water shutoffs and an investment in water infrastructure.

Sincerely,

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