



Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

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POLICY BRIEF

ISSUE: Speaker Paul Ryan stripped the Buy America provision from the Water Infrastructure bill (“Water Resources Development Act”).

BACKGROUND: Our nation’s drinking water infrastructure is in dire need of repair. Almost 150,000 homes in Wisconsin have drinking water provided by lead pipes. Due to the harmful effects that these lead pipes pose, these lead pipes must be replaced.

To assist communities with replacing lead pipes that carry our drinking water and other drinking water challenges facing communities, the United States House and Senate each voted on a bill known as the Water Resources Development Act.

Wisconsin’s U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin made sure that when the Senate voted on its Water Resources Development Act, the bill contained strong Buy America provisions. More specifically, Sen. Baldwin’s amendment called for all steel and iron used in water infrastructure projects to be 100% American-made. Sen. Baldwin made this commitment to ensure that the water that Wisconsin and American families drink is carried through high-quality pipes, not pipes made in foreign countries with lower standards.

In September, the Senate voted on the Water Resources Development Act, with Sen. Baldwin’s Buy America provision. The Senate passed the bill with overwhelming bipartisan support. Unfortunately, the U.S. House of Representative’s version did not have any Buy America provision.

Before the Water Resources Development Act can be sent to the President for his signature, the U.S. Senate and House must reconcile the two versions.

During the reconciliation process over the past few days, House Speaker Paul Ryan (WI) led the effort to remove the Buy America provision.

In response to Speaker Ryan’s action, Sen. Baldwin and her colleagues introduced a Buy America amendment to the bill.

A final vote on the bill is scheduled for this week.

DEMAND:

Speaker Ryan and Republican leadership must either re-insert the Buy America provision to the Water Resources Development Act *or* immediately schedule a vote on the Buy America amendment, introduced by Senator Baldwin and two of her Senate colleagues. Congress should not be allowed to go home until they show support for American workers and our families by passing a Water Resources Development Act that includes strong Buy America provisions.