



Submitted to: **Joint Legislative Budget Hearing**

Regarding: **2026-2027 Executive Budget**

Submitted by: **New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA)**

Date: **January 22, 2026**

### **Executive Summary & Key Requests**

The New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony on the FY 2026-2027 Executive Budget. NYSAWWA strongly supports New York State's continued commitment to clean and safe water infrastructure, which is foundational to public health, housing affordability, environmental protection, and economic growth.

To ensure that New York's historic clean water investments deliver timely, cost-effective results for communities across the state, NYSAWWA respectfully urges the Legislature to:

- **Maintain the \$750 million annual commitment to clean water infrastructure, including \$500 million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA), to support critical drinking water and wastewater projects statewide.**
- **Establish and fund S1850A / A6012 Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program (SWAP) at \$100 million to provide a predictable funding source for routine water system repair, replacement, and maintenance—investments essential to system reliability and housing readiness.**
- **Ensure full staffing capacity within State agency water programs at the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) to prevent project delays, control costs, and maximize the return on State infrastructure investments.**

Together, these actions will protect public health, support housing development, improve affordability for ratepayers, and ensure that clean water investments are delivered efficiently and effectively.

## Full Written Testimony

Thank you for the opportunity to submit testimony on behalf of the New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA) regarding the FY 2026-2027 Executive Budget.

NYSAWWA strongly supports New York State's continued leadership and investment in clean and safe water infrastructure. Reliable drinking water and wastewater systems are essential to public health, environmental protection, housing affordability, workforce stability, and economic growth. These systems are foundational infrastructure that every community depends on every day.

NYSAWWA represents public water suppliers, engineers, regulators, water industry manufacturers and vendors, and educators who collectively provide safe, reliable, and affordable drinking water to more than 19 million New Yorkers. Our members are responsible for implementing the very investments and policies advanced by the State, making NYSAWWA a key partner in turning statewide priorities into local, on-the-ground results.

New York State leaders and NYSAWWA recognize that water and wastewater systems are not optional services—they are foundational infrastructure. Communities cannot grow, build housing, or protect public health without reliable water supply and sewer capacity.

New York's proposed \$750 million annual clean water investment framework appropriately reflects the scale and complexity of maintaining and upgrading water and wastewater systems statewide. Programs such as the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA) play a critical role in modernizing aging infrastructure, addressing emerging contaminants, and protecting affordability.

However, funding alone does not guarantee success. Clean water investment must combine:

- Sustained capital funding,
- Proactive system maintenance, and
- Adequate staffing capacity within State agencies to move projects forward efficiently.

Without all three, even well-funded programs can experience delays, rising costs, and missed opportunities—particularly for housing and community development.

### **NYSAWWA FY 2026-2027 Budget Priorities**

#### **1. Maintain the \$750 Million Annual Commitment to Clean Water Infrastructure, Including \$500 Million for the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA)**

NYSAWWA strongly supports the State's five-year, \$3.75 billion commitment to clean water infrastructure—\$750 million annually—to modernize drinking water and wastewater systems, protect public health, and support housing and economic development.

A significant portion of this investment is delivered through the Clean Water Infrastructure Act (CWIA), the State's most effective tool for funding major drinking water and wastewater projects. NYSAWWA supports maintaining \$500 million for CWIA to ensure communities can continue advancing projects that protect public health, address emerging contaminants such as PFAS, and maintain affordability for local governments and ratepayers.

Since its creation in 2017, CWIA has funded thousands of projects statewide and remains central to meeting New York's infrastructure needs. Sustained CWIA funding enables municipalities to plan responsibly rather than react to emergencies and directly supports housing and economic development by ensuring systems have adequate capacity and reliability.

This investment supports New York's statewide priorities by:

- Enabling housing and economic development through adequate water and sewer capacity;
- Addressing emerging contaminants such as PFAS;
- Protecting affordability for families and businesses; and
- Strengthening community resilience and environmental protection.

## **2. Establish S1850A / A6012 - Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program (SWAP) – \$100 Million**

NYSAWWA respectfully supports the establishment of the Safe Water Infrastructure Action Program (SWAP), modeled after the CHIPS program for transportation infrastructure. SWAP would provide a predictable, dedicated funding stream for routine water system repair, replacement, and maintenance—investments that are essential to system reliability but often difficult for local governments to fund.

Water and wastewater infrastructure is a gating factor for housing development. Communities cannot permit, construct, or occupy new housing without reliable water supply and sewer capacity. While CWIA effectively funds large capital upgrades, routine maintenance and targeted repairs are what keep systems operating within permitted capacity and ready to support housing growth.

Across New York State, deferred maintenance has contributed to emergency failures, sewer capacity constraints, and, in some cases, development moratoria—delaying housing projects that are otherwise ready to move forward. These delays increase construction costs, strain municipal budgets, and ultimately undermine housing affordability.

SWAP would directly address this gap by enabling proactive, planned maintenance that prevents small issues from becoming major failures. By keeping systems reliable and compliant, SWAP ensures that water infrastructure does not become a bottleneck to housing development, workforce growth, or economic expansion.

SWAP would:

- Prevent costly emergency repairs and infrastructure failures;

- Protect housing development timelines and reduce project delays;
- Improve long-term affordability for ratepayers;
- Strengthen workforce stability through planned maintenance; and
- Maximize the value and lifespan of CWIA-funded investments.

In this way, SWAP is not only a water infrastructure program—it is a housing-enabling investment that supports affordability, accelerates project delivery, and strengthens community resilience.

### **3. Ensure Full Staffing Capacity Within State Agency Water Programs**

NYSAWWA strongly supports ensuring that the State's water programs within the Department of Health (DOH), Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) are funded and staffed at levels sufficient to effectively deliver New York's clean water investments and priorities.

As New York advances unprecedented investments in water infrastructure, treatment for emerging contaminants, and housing-linked development, staffing capacity within these water-focused program areas has become a critical factor in successful implementation.

Utilities across the state report long review timelines, delayed permitting and approvals, and limited access to technical assistance—challenges that directly affect project schedules, increase costs, and delay housing and infrastructure projects that communities are ready to build.

Adequate staffing within State agency water programs is essential to:

- Ensure timely review, permitting, and approval of State-funded projects;
- Support implementation of evolving drinking water and wastewater regulations;
- Reduce infrastructure-related delays affecting housing and economic development;
- Maximize the return on State clean water investments; and
- Protect public health and environmental outcomes through effective oversight.

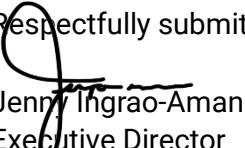
Staffing capacity for the State's water programs is a foundational component of successful infrastructure delivery. NYSAWWA encourages continued investment in these specialized program areas to ensure that clean water funding, regulatory initiatives, and statewide priorities are implemented efficiently, predictably, and in partnership with local utilities.

Together, these investments sustained capital investment, proactive maintenance through SWAP, and adequate staffing capacity are essential to achieving New York's clean water goals. NYSAWWA strongly supports New York's clean water priorities and stands ready to serve as a strategic partner in implementation. Our members provide real-world insight into what is needed to deliver projects on time, on budget, and in a manner that protects ratepayer affordability. Continued collaboration between state leaders, agencies, and local utilities is essential to achieving shared goals.



Thank you for your continued leadership and commitment to clean, safe, and affordable water for all New Yorkers. We look forward to working with you to secure the investments necessary to protect public health and support community growth across New York State.

Respectfully submitted,

  
Jenny Ingrao-Aman  
Executive Director  
New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA)

**About New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA)**

The New York Section American Water Works Association (NYSAWWA) is a not-for-profit professional organization representing thousands of water professionals across New York State. NYSAWWA is dedicated to the advancement of public health and safety, and the protection of the environment through the improvement of water management, treatment, distribution, and infrastructure. The organization serves as a technical, educational, and policy resource for water utilities, municipalities, regulators, and elected officials on issues affecting drinking water, wastewater, and water resource sustainability.