

Statement for the Record

House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure

Subcommittee on Water Resources and the Environment Hearing

“Building Back Better: The Urgent Need for Investment in America’s Wastewater Infrastructure”

Tuesday, February 23, 2021 at 11:00am

Rep. Marilyn Strickland (WA-10)

In Support of the Testimony of Puyallup Tribe Chairman Bill Sterud

“Distinguished members of the subcommittee--it is an honor to have the opportunity to discuss these important issues. First and foremost, I extend my sincere thanks to Chairwoman Napolitano and Chairman DeFazio for working with my office to extend an invitation to the Puyallup Tribe to testify at today’s hearing.

Any conversation on wastewater infrastructure and the dire need for investment must include Tribal voices at the table. Chairwoman Napolitano and Chairman DeFazio understand that fundamental truth, and I am heartened that the Puget Sound, Washington’s 10th Congressional District, and the needs of the Puyallup Tribe are well-represented through the testimony of Chairman Bill Sterud. I thank him for his participation and leadership.

As reflected in Chairman Sterud’s testimony, it is clear that the Congress must renew our investment in the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (SRF), a key tool for our Tribes and communities. The Environmental Protection Agency projected that at least \$271 billion in investment over 20 years is required to sufficiently repair our wastewater treatment infrastructure.

I echo Chairman Sterud’s testimony in highlighting both the health and infrastructure disparities for Tribal communities. The Indian Health Service estimates that the current water infrastructure sanitation needs for Native American homes and communities is \$2.78 billion. Approximately 30% of homes across our nation’s Tribes require sanitation facility improvements. I stand with the Puyallup Tribe and the Chairman in supporting an increase to the Clean Water Indian Set-Aside (CWISA) program, because our Tribes’ health and wellbeing depend on it. I look forward to working with the Chairwoman this Congress on this, and other issues to support our water infrastructure.

I want to close by emphasizing that in the wake of a global pandemic, our Tribal communities need federal investment now more than ever. I am looking forward to working with the distinguished members on this committee to ensure that “building back better” is not just a slogan, but a mandate to improve our communities. Thank you very much for your time.”