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Member Association of the
Water Environment Federation

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RE: COVID-19 Vaccinations for Water and Wastewater Sector Employees

Dear Pennsylvania Leaders:

On behalf of our members and non-members who serve as essential workers providing clean water to communities across the Commonwealth, the Pennsylvania Water Environment Association (PWEA), the Pennsylvania Section of the American Water Works Association (PaAWWA), the Pennsylvania Municipal Authorities Association (PMAA), and The Water Works Operators Association of Pennsylvania (WWOAP) would like to highlight for you the silent yet essential work that our utilities perform to help protect Pennsylvania residents from COVID-19.

As the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania develops plans for distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine, we ask that our frontline utility staff members receive priority in Phase 1-B. This phase includes “people who play a key role in keeping essential functions of society running and cannot socially distance in the workplace,” as described in the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) *COVID-19 Vaccination Program Interim Playbook for Jurisdiction Operations*.

Vaccinating frontline water and wastewater utility staff members and contracted personnel working in treatment and collections systems operations and maintenance is particularly important because, as a lifeline sector, water and wastewater sector services underpin all aspects of society, including hospitals and long-term care facilities. Due to the specialized skills and licenses required for utility operations, and the corresponding challenges in finding replacements for staff members who may become ill or exposed, it is essential to mitigate staff members' COVID-19 risks through all possible means, including vaccinations.

Utility employees provide drinking water and wastewater services to Commonwealth residents. In addition, they provide services for other essential businesses serving Commonwealth residents such as hospitals and other facilities providing healthcare. Our services are essential for keeping these and other facilities operating and for protecting public health. We urge you to consider these essential staff members should be given priority for the vaccine in Phase 1-B.

We appreciate your consideration of our critical water sector workers in your vaccine prioritization plans. Please contact one of us if you have any questions or would like to discuss vaccine prioritization for our workers.

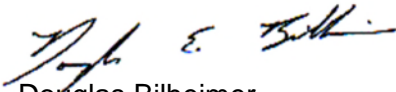
Sincerely,



David Brown, L.O.
President, PWEA



Craig Palmer
Chair, PA-AWWA



Douglas Bilheimer
Executive Director, PMAA



Jamie R. Shambaugh
President, WWOAP