

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Permanent Buy America provision from Sens. Baldwin and Braun passes Senate Committee

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works (EPW) has passed a permanent “Buy America” provision from Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Mike Braun (R-IN) that would rebuild America’s crumbling drinking water infrastructure with American-made iron and steel.

The bipartisan reform from Baldwin and Braun was included in drinking water legislation, the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020*, that passed alongside water resources development legislation, *America’s Water Infrastructure Act of 2020*. The legislation passed the Senate Committee with bipartisan support on Wednesday.

“I strongly believe American workers should build our infrastructure with American products, and taxpayers’ money should not be spent to support foreign workers. We need to put Wisconsin manufacturers and workers to work rebuilding our nation’s crumbling water infrastructure and they deserve a permanent commitment from Washington that rewards their hard work,” **said Senator Baldwin**. “This legislation provides a long term commitment to American manufacturing and ensures that critical drinking water projects will help create American jobs and use high quality American iron and steel.”

“As a Main Street entrepreneur who has created hundreds of American jobs, I am proud that the ‘Buy America’ provision requires this infrastructure built with taxpayer dollars to use American-made iron and steel,” **said Senator Braun**.

“Americans deserve the right to clean, drinkable water and as we upgrade our aging water infrastructure, and the federal dollars used to supply these systems should not come from unfairly traded Chinese steel.”

“The Covid-19 crisis has exposed both how vital and how vulnerable U.S. manufacturing workers are and demonstrated a pressing need to do everything we can to protect them and their livelihoods. A permanent Buy America provision in the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund is a common sense measure that would ensure that American taxpayer dollars both improve our country’s water infrastructure and safeguard American jobs,” **said Tom Conway, President, United Steelworkers International.** “We applaud Senator Baldwin, Senator Braun, and the Environment and Public Works Committee’s efforts to make this provision permanent.”

The American Foundry Society (AFS) also strongly endorses Senator Baldwin and Senator Braun’s provision making permanent the iron and steel Buy American standard in EPA’s Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund included in the *Drinking Water Infrastructure Act of 2020*. “More than ever, supporting domestic manufacturing by purchasing American-made castings for these critical drinking water infrastructure projects across the nation is sound policy, keeps American taxpayer dollars in our economy, and reinvests in the U.S. manufacturing base, creating jobs at all levels of the supply chain, including in Wisconsin and Indiana,” **said Doug Kurkul, CEO, American Foundry Society (AFS).**

“As we invest in our nation’s water infrastructure, American taxpayers expect—now more than ever—that the iron and steel products incorporated into these taxpayer-financed projects will be melted, molded and made in America by American workers and the foundries and mills that employ them,” **said Neenah Foundry’s Municipal Sales Vice President Craig Wenzlick.** “On behalf of Neenah Enterprises of Neenah, Wisconsin, our deep appreciation goes to Senator Baldwin and Senator Braun for their leadership in securing a permanent procurement preference for American-made iron and steel products for drinking water infrastructure.”

The Baldwin/Braun reform, the *Made in America Water Infrastructure Act*, requires that 100 percent American-made iron and steel is used in water infrastructure projects funded by the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). The DWSRF is a federal-state partnership that acts as an infrastructure bank to help ensure safe drinking water in all 50 states and territories. Between 1997 and 2018, the DWSRF

program provided more than \$38.2 billion in low interest loans to more than 14,000 projects. This reform would require all of these projects to use American-made iron and steel. Eligible projects include improving drinking water treatment; fixing or replacing old pipes; improving the source of the water supply; replacing or constructing finished water storage tanks; or any other infrastructure projects needed to protect public health.

An online version of this release is available [here](#).