March 30th, 2023

The Honorable Chris Holden  
Chair, Assembly Appropriations Committee  
1021 O Street, Suite 8220  
Sacramento, CA 95814


Dear Chair Holden,

The California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA), one of the state’s foremost grassroots senior and disability advocacy organizations, representing over 1 million Californians, is proud to support AB 838 (Connolly), which will raise the bar for water providers to help consumers understand both infrastructure strengths and weaknesses while affording taxpayers cost information and transparency.

In recent years, communities in Flint, Michigan, Jackson, Mississippi, and Newark, New Jersey discovered that underinvestment in water infrastructure led to system failures that left residents without safe drinking water for weeks. To adequately understand the investment water utilities are making in their infrastructure and how those investments are impacting customer bills, water regulators and policy makers need more and better data from water providers.

AB 838 requires California water providers to submit:
1. Infrastructure Investment
2. Customer Bill data.

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) would receive this information annually. Residents & businesses should have access to this data to be able to judge the performance of local water providers and improve the delivery of water and the water infrastructure.

CARA is committed to Californians who are vulnerable to the types of water crises cited above. Most do not comprehend that our water infrastructure is already in a state of disrepair. 370 failing water systems in California disproportionately impact disadvantaged communities. Four hundred thirty-two (432) systems serving more than 1 million Californians face the risk of failure. Increasing data available to the SWRCB should make it easier for Californians to identify systems at risk and begin the process of improving water delivery.
For these reasons, CARA supports AB 838, and we respectfully ask for your AYE vote.

Sincerely,

Hene Kelly
Chair, Legislative Committee
California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)

Keith Umemoto
Co-Chair, Legislative Committee
California Alliance for Retired Americans (CARA)