

# water advocates

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## For Immediate Release

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## Congress Prioritizes Drinking Water and Sanitation for the World's Poor

### *Water Advocates Commends Congress for Addressing World's Largest Public Health Threat*

**Washington, D.C., December 19, 2007**—The U.S. Congress demonstrated once again its leadership regarding the key development challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> century—the global safe drinking water and sanitation crisis. The omnibus appropriations bill passed by the House and Senate this week includes \$300 million for safe drinking water and sanitation supply projects to implement the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005.

If the omnibus bill is signed into law by the President, it will result in a dramatic increase in funding for safe, affordable, and sustainable supplies of drinking water and sanitation in the poorest regions of the developing world. Strong implementing language in both the text of the bill and the accompanying joint explanatory statement will help ensure that the funding is spent as Congress intends.

**“Water Advocates commends Congress for providing this vital funding. Around the world, the health, education and economic well-being of a community often hinges on safe drinking water and basic sanitation. This Congressional support—which complements new and greater funding for water from private American citizens—will reduce disease and improve the quality of life for many of the world’s poor,”** said David Douglas, president of Water Advocates.

**“In the Senate, I would especially like to thank State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman Leahy, Ranking Member Gregg, Senators Inouye, Durbin, McConnell, Specter, Bennett, and Brownback for their leadership,”** continued Douglas.

**“In the House, I would especially like to thank Appropriations Committee Chairman Obey, State and Foreign Operations Appropriations Subcommittee Chairwoman Lowey, Subcommittee Ranking Member Wolf, and Representatives Jackson, McCollum, Lee, Kilpatrick, Payne, Smith of New Jersey, and Blumenauer for their leadership on this important issue,”** he added.

The majority of preventable sicknesses in the world stem from contaminated drinking water and inadequate sanitation, which together kill between 2 and 5 million people each year—mostly children under five. 2008 is also the International Year of Sanitation—an effort to bring more attention to the fact that 40% of the world’s population—2.6 billion people—lack adequate sanitation.

The Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-121) makes it a major goal of US foreign policy to help halve the proportion of people without access to safe, sustainable, and affordable drinking water and sanitation by 2015, and creates a framework for achieving that goal.

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Water Advocates is a U.S.-based nonprofit organization dedicated to increasing American support for worldwide access to safe, affordable, and sustainable drinking water and adequate sanitation. For more information go to [www.wateradvocates.org](http://www.wateradvocates.org).

David Douglas, president of Water Advocates, is available for interviews to discuss the significance and potential impact of this historic appropriation.

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