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March 16, 2006

The Honorable Jim Kolbe
Chairman, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related
Programs Appropriations
HB-26, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6021

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related
Programs Appropriations
HB-26, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515-6021

Dear Chairman Kolbe and Ranking Member Lowey,

I am respectfully requesting \$30 million for rural water and sanitation in east Africa in the FY2007 Appropriations bill. Specifically, I would like to request \$9.25 million for Ethiopia, \$6.25 million for Kenya, \$10.25 million for southern Sudan, and \$4.25 million for Mozambique.

Last year, Congress committed itself to making "access to safe water and sanitation for developing countries a specific policy objective of the United States foreign assistance programs" by passing H.R. 1973, the Senator Paul Simon Water for the Poor Act of 2005. I support the continued funding of this objective in the FY2007 Appropriations bill. By building rural water wells and improving basic facilities for water provision and sanitation, the U.S. government can make a profound difference in areas where clean water is lacking. For the small expense of drilling a well and ensuring its maintenance, local people will enjoy a longer, healthier life. It will also free the hardship of those who must travel miles for clean water, usually women and children.

The United States is committed to halting the rapid spread of HIV in Africa and treating those who are currently infected. Clean water is an essential ingredient in preventing the spread of many illnesses and the treatment of those suffering with AIDS. Without it, weakened immune systems quickly fall victim to water-borne microbes and pathogens. Over 300 million people in Africa, most in rural areas, still do not have access to a safe water supply and adequate sanitation, and almost half of all Africans suffer from water and sanitation-related diseases.