Dear:

I have noted with interest your comment with respect to the bill (H.R. 3610) to amend the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to increase grants for construction of sewage treatment works, which is now in Conference to work out the differences as it passed the House and Senate.

When the program was originated, Congress authorized $50 million a year for ten years, or an aggregate of $500 million. I am not insensitive of the fact that communities have taken advantage of the program. What is before us now is a proposal to raise the ante from $50 million to $80 million a year, for a total of $800 million. That would be a normal increase of $300 million over what was authorized in the first instance.

My objection to the proposal is simply that, in the first place, there is no State matching of funds. It is astonishing to me that communities, large and small, can come to the Federal government and ask for money, while the State of which they are political subdivisions does not call for a contribution for this kind of facility.

My second objection is that the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare has interposed its opposition to the program and made it very clear before the Committees of Congress. Third, the Bureau of the Budget is opposed to the bill because of the burden and impact upon future expenditures. I think I can say with reasonable certainty that the President is also opposed to the proposal. This measure would add materially to the budget and would result in an additional tax upon the revenues and incomes of the country. It would result in a very long-term burden upon this government.

Under present circumstances, the fiscal condition of the country being what it is, and in view of the uncertain conditions which confront us at the present time, I could not vote to add such a charge to the budget. I have pledged myself to support the President as strongly as I know how in his efforts to secure a balanced budget for fiscal year 1961 in order to preserve the predicted surplus as a payment on the national debt.

Again let me reiterate that this is a program calling for an $800 million charge upon the Federal Treasury for the next ten years with no State matching of funds, and I feel confident that it will be met with a veto unless it is watered down considerably in Conference.

With every good wish,

Everett McKinley Dirksen