Much of the United States’ water infrastructure systems were built decades if not a hundred years ago or more. They are nearing the end of their life spans and must be updated.

Modernizing these systems will be costly and time consuming. Many communities use “closed competition,” creating a virtual monopoly for one pipe material.

The National Taxpayers Union (NTU) estimates that replacing our entire water infrastructure would cost $1.32 TRILLION. According to the NTU, by switching to an “open competition” process more than $371 BILLION could be saved.

According to a study done by BCC Research, switching from a “closed competition” to “open competition” could save between 32% and 35% in pipe capital costs alone.

The average cost to replace water pipes in a “closed competition” is $51.83 per foot, but with “open competition” the average cost is $33.33 in pipe capital costs alone. This is a savings of nearly $100,000 per mile. Furthermore, competition lowers costs for the existing material. Ductile iron pipe of the same diameter was found to be less costly in open competition cities than in closed cities.