



ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports increased federal funding levels for water and wastewater, including the exploration of developing a Water Trust Fund to provide multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations and local governments adequate resources to meet the current and future water and sewer needs of the nation's communities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

PARTNERSHIPS

- Support the federal government partnership with local governments and regions on water and wastewater issues.
- Engage directly with local elected officials who understand the local needs, opportunities, and obligations through their "on-the-ground" perspective.

FUNDING

- Explore the creation of Clean Water Trust Fund (WTF) to provide dedicated, firewalled and sustainable funding to clean and safe water resources and infrastructure.
- Direct a portion of WTF funds to units of local government and regional councils of governments (COGs)/multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations.
- Increase funding to multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations to develop regional water allocation plans.
- Increase pass through funding for planning from a state's allocation in order to sustain programs.
- Reauthorize and fully fund both the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan and Clean Water State Revolving Loan Funds to ensure adequate resources for wastewater and drinking water treatment facilities.
- Fund the Clean Water Act Sec. 208 Areawide Water Quality Management Plans, which describe and promote efficient and comprehensive programs for controlling water pollution from point and nonpoint sources in a region.
- Examine innovative financing ideas for funding water and wastewater infrastructure projects such as "Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones," a financing mechanism that would allow for businesses or individuals to make contributions toward infrastructure/economic development project(s) for a tax deduction.

PROGRAM

- Establish the "United States Commission on Rebuilding America for the 21st Century" (HR 5976) to examine and make recommendations on the nation's infrastructure.
- Establish the "Twenty-First Century Water Commission" (HR 135) to study and develop recommendations for a comprehensive water strategy to address future water needs with membership to include a COG representative.
- Reintroduce and enact HR 569, Water Quality Investment Act of 2007, amending the Federal Water Pollution Control Act to authorize appropriations of sewer overflow control grants.
- Seek coordination among all federal agencies that deal with water issues to maximize the impact of federal water quality programs.
- Encourage and incentivize innovative water technology use such as recycling wastewater into drinking water.
- Promote and fund sustainable water infrastructure and practices such as green infrastructure.
- Fund research to determine the impacts of climate change on water resources and infrastructure.
- Ensure national standards protect the safety of America's water infrastructure systems, without hindering local activities.

BACKGROUND

According to a recent poll, nine out of ten Americans believe safe and clean water is a national priority that deserves federal investment. Projected drinking water and wastewater needs range from \$485 billion to nearly \$1.2 trillion, while federal funding to clean water spending has shrunk dramatically - from 78% in 1978 to just 3% today. Congress, therefore, should assist states and local communities to address the growing infrastructure needed to maintain a clean and safe supply of water, and recognize the work of COGs in their efforts to assist local governments address quality and supply issues by increasing the amount of funds available for planning, technical assistance, and responding to emerging water issues.