



#### ISSUE

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

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

##### PARTNERSHIPS

- Support the federal government partnership with local governments and regional planning organizations 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.
- Include water and wastewater issues as a core element within the federal interagency Sustainable Communities Partnership.

##### 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 (COG)/multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations for regional watershed planning activities.
- Increase pass through funding for planning from a State's allocation in order to sustain programs.
- Allow for more flexibility with local match requirements.
- Provide appropriate funding levels for sewer overflow control grants.
- Increase funding to multi-jurisdictional regional planning organizations to develop regional water allocation plans.
- 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.
- Reauthorize and 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.
- Authorize "Regional Infrastructure Improvement Zones" (RIIZs), a change to the federal tax code that would allow for businesses or individuals to make tax deductible contributions toward COG/MPO pre-approved infrastructure projects.

##### 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.
- 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 polls, 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, must assist states and local communities to address growing infrastructure needs and maintain a clean and safe supply of water. Congress must also recognize the efforts of COGs 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.