



New York Water Environment Association, Inc.

The Water Quality Management Professionals

525 Plum Street, Suite 102 • Syracuse, New York 13204

(315) 422-7811 • Fax: 422-3851 • www.nywea.org

2008

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81ST ANNUAL MEETING

NYC Marriott Marquis

February 1-4, 2009



20 January 2009

Governor David A. Paterson

State Capitol

Albany, NY 12224-0341

Dear Governor Paterson,

The New York Water Environment Association (NYWEA) is pleased to have this opportunity to provide information regarding infrastructure needs related to the proposed Economic Recovery and Reinvestment (Stimulus) legislation. On behalf of our 2,500 members, we would like to commend you and Commissioner Grannis, Sandi Allen and Matt Millea for their support and efforts with President Obama's transition team and New York's Congressional delegation for a nationwide economic recovery package that includes funding of the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) and the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF). We are in agreement with the proposal to utilize the CWSRF and DWSRF to distribute funding from the Federal Government to the States and we agree with the proposal to allow the states to make decisions regarding how the money gets distributed and what projects should be funded.

On the state level, we are in receipt of the January 14, 2009, letter to municipalities from NYSEFC that explains the possible financing through the SRF and provides advice to municipalities on how to be prepared for Economic Recovery funds. This letter and your new website are very informative and helpful for our members. We have several comments and recommendations that we would like you to consider in developing the details of this funding program:

1. We encourage increasing the stimulus package from \$6B to \$12B for clean water, and will be advocating for increases to the congressional delegation.
2. The "streamlined" CWSRF financing application included in your new website is a great step in assisting municipalities. We recommend that each step of the funding process be "streamlined" as much as possible to decrease the administrative time and effort required by municipalities as well as by NYSEFC and NYSDEC to make this program successful. For example, we have found that SRF projects are often broken down into several phases that must be tracked and reported upon throughout the process. To save administrative time by the municipalities and review time by NYSEFC, most projects could be administered in one phase.
3. In order to demonstrate job creation and to help close the gap between infrastructure needs and available funding, we believe that as much money as possible should be distributed as grants rather than low interest loans. Thus, the component of the HR Bill that mandates distribution of CWSRF and DWSRF stimulus monies of 50% as grants, should be modified to allow for this amount to be greater.
4. We request that you include worthy projects that are not currently listed on the CWSRF Intended Use Plan (IUP) for the following three reasons.

First, many worthy and needed projects are not included on the IUP because municipalities have not been willing to place their communities further in debt given the general lack of state and federal

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funding in the past few years or have chosen to consider alternate vehicles for funding and financing their projects. Second, we understand that President Obama and Congressional Leaders are proposing to dedicate significant money to “green” or sustainable infrastructure projects.

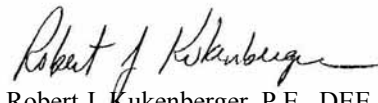
The most beneficial and state-of-the-art green infrastructure projects are not likely to be on the IUP because support for green technology is a recent phenomenon. Third, many projects that would incorporate updated innovative technologies may not be on the current IUP. We understand that there may be future phases of the program that would allow projects not on the current IUP to be included and funded.

We do not agree that all projects currently on the IUP should be exhausted before more sustainable projects with demonstrated water quality benefits are funded.

5. We support funding criteria that is in concert with New York State’s Clean Water Collaborative Resolution, including: sustainable water and wastewater infrastructure that would provide for proper maintenance and reinvestment, supports water conservation, energy efficiency and the use of green infrastructure techniques and promotes updated, innovative technologies and upgrades and improvements to meet current regulatory requirements to insure that water quality standards are maintained. We further believe that funded projects should result in well defined water quality benefits. Projects that encourage suburban and rural sprawl should not be given equal weight as projects that promote sustainable development. Finally, projects that undertake a watershed approach should be given added importance.
6. We would like you to consider revisions to the current ranking of projects on the IUP because the current ranking favors Consent Order driven projects. Non consent order projects that meet other criteria such as water quality benefits, sustainability, and application of green and innovative technology should be moved up the list.

We would be happy to work with you to develop and implement this program in whatever way you believe that we can be of assistance. NYWEA believes that the Economic Recovery Program is an opportunity to make investments in sustainable infrastructure. This is our chance to show that we can “get it right” and that together we can meet the challenges before us.

Sincerely,



Robert J. Kukenberger, P.E., DEE
NYWEA President

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- Commissioner Grannis, NYSDEC
- Matt Millea, NYSEFC
- Sandra Allen, NYSDEC
- Members of the Clean Water Collaborative