

Why Michigan Needs a National Clean Water Trust Fund



The United States's wastewater infrastructure, aging and increasingly unable to handle the pressures of modern society, is in serious danger. When pipes break and sewers overflow, communities, the environment, and our economy all suffer.

Recognizing that states across the country were faced with clean water spending requirements well beyond their ability to support, the federal government created the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The fund, established in the late 1980s, provides states with federal grant money that they then use to make low-interest loans to communities for clean water projects.

Unfortunately, funding for the program has atrophied since it became fully operational in 1991. Since that year, funding has been cut by half (nearly two-thirds when adjusted for inflation), leaving states scrambling to deal with growing backlogs of maintenance and improvement projects. Broken pipes and sewer overflows spill more than one trillion gallons of untreated sewage every year and contaminate our beaches, waterways, and estuaries.

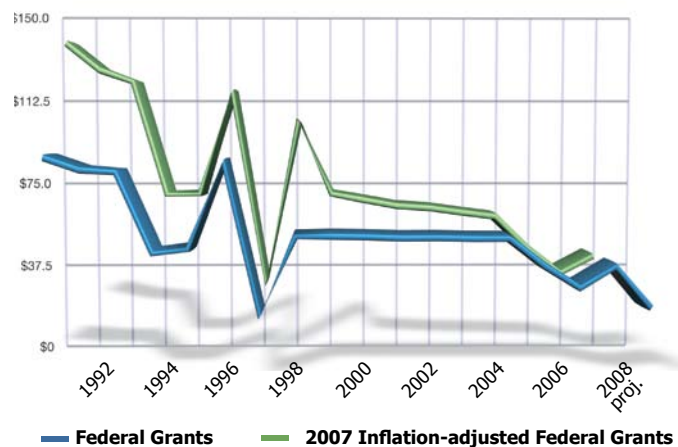
Given the fickle year-to-year funding of the SRF and the urgency of our clean water troubles, we need a new solution. A federal clean water trust fund would provide a steady, reliable, and equitable source of funding for needed projects across the country. By sidestepping the contentious appropriations process, a trust fund would safeguard our clean water infrastructure, our environment, and our economy.

Funding Gap: Michigan's Intended Use Plan and Priority List shows the need for \$1.77 billion in wastewater infrastructure spending. The state, however, received only \$46 million from the federal government in 2007 – less than 1/38th its needs.

Federal contributions to Michigan's clean water funding efforts have decreased by 47.8 percent since the Clean Water SRF was fully implemented in fiscal 1991 and 65.9 percent when adjusted for inflation.

“Over the long haul revolving funds will not be the panacea.” – Chip Heckathorn, Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Federal Funds for Michigan's Clean Water State Revolving Fund from Fiscal Year 1991 to 2007 (in Millions of Dollars)



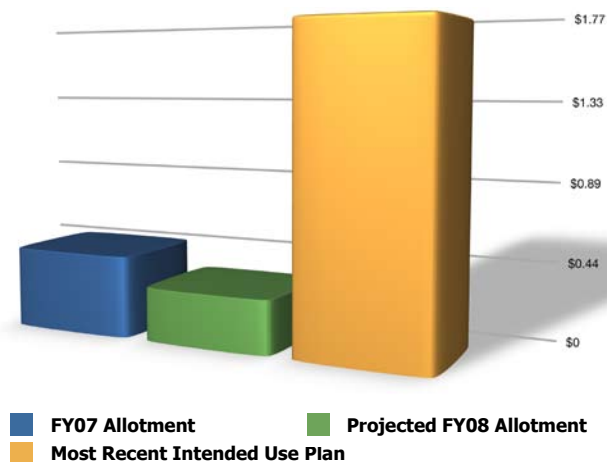
Water Quality: According to EPA's most recently released assessment, 24 percent of the state's river miles and 100 percent of lakes suffer from impaired water quality. Additionally, none of Michigan's Great Lakes shore miles fully support fish consumption and 99 percent of the state's wetlands are impaired.

Beach Closings: A report by the Natural Resources Defense Council shows nationwide beach closings and swimming advisories were at an all-time high in 2006. Michigan experienced 124 closures and advisories lasting six weeks or fewer in 2006, one extended, and three permanent.

Job Creation: One billion dollars in federal infrastructure investment leads to approximately 47,500 new jobs. Addressing Michigan's currently listed wastewater infrastructure needs would spur 84,075 employment opportunities.

For more information, download the full report, Clear Waters: Why America Needs a Clean Water Trust Fund, and analyses of all 50 states at: www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/clearwaters

Michigan's Clean Water Needs vs. Federal Funding (in Billions of Dollars)



Food & Water Watch
 1400 16th St. NW, Suite 225 • Washington, DC 20036
 tel: (202) 797-6550 • fax: (202) 797-6560
foodandwater@fwwatch.org
www.foodandwaterwatch.org