

Why New Jersey 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: New Jersey's wastewater infrastructure needs total an impressive \$3.95 billion over the next five years. However, the state is facing a difficult time squaring those needs with federal grant allotments totaling only \$43.7 million in 2007, a sum 1/90th of the necessary spending.

Federal contributions to New Jersey'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.

"The future looks bleak...The money is running short and we will rely on the priority list to determine who receives funding." – Maryclaire D'Andrea, Assistant Director/CFO, New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust

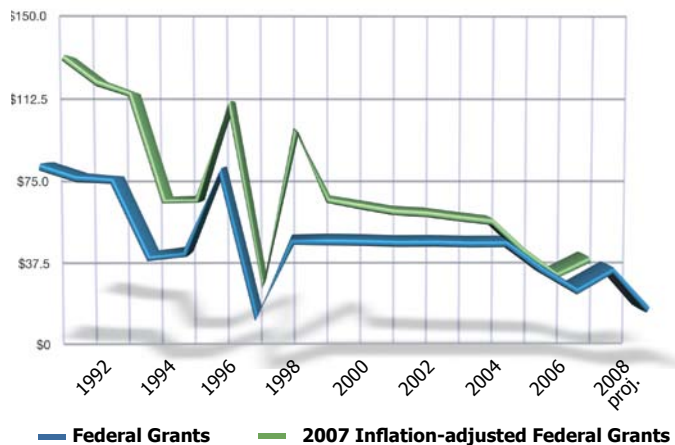
Water Quality: According to EPA's most recently released assessment, 63 percent of the state's river miles suffer from impaired water quality. Ninety-nine percent of the state's lakes do not support fish consumption, 33 percent do not fully support swimming, and 13 percent do not support aquatic life. Twenty-three percent of estuaries surveyed at the time did not fully support aquatic life and 26 percent did not support fish consumption.

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. New Jersey experienced 134 closure or advisory events lasting six weeks or fewer in 2006, up substantially from 79 in 2005.

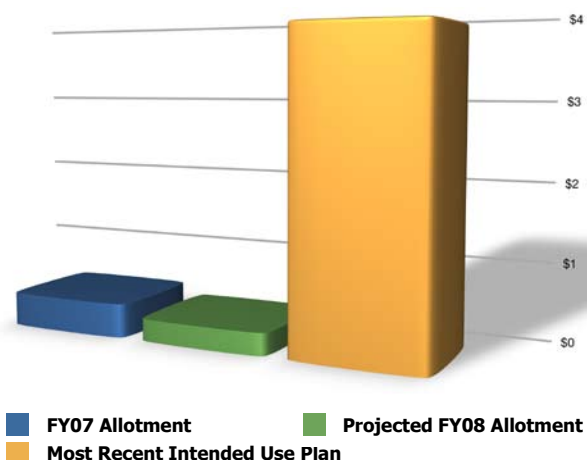
Job Creation: One billion dollars in federal infrastructure investment leads to approximately 47,500 new jobs. Addressing New Jersey's currently listed wastewater infrastructure needs would spur 187,625 employment opportunities.

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

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



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



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