

Why Nevada 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: Nevada's Intended Use Plan and Priority List shows that the state currently requires \$247.4 million in wastewater infrastructure spending, more than 47 times its 2007 federal allotment of \$5.2 million.

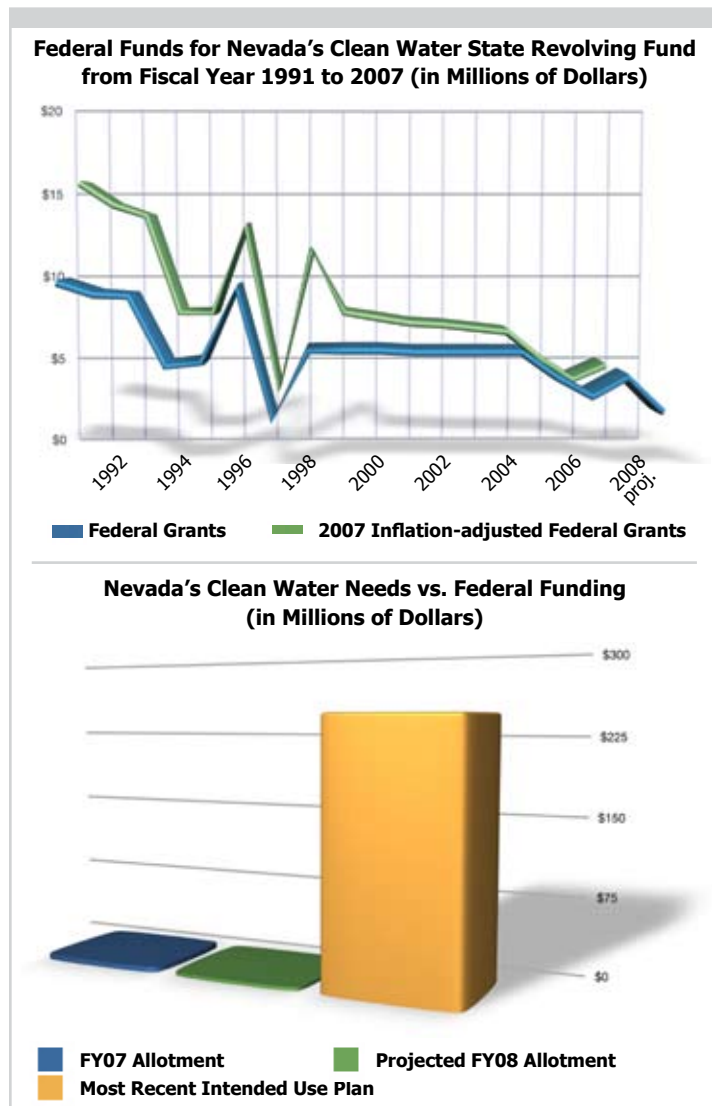
Federal contributions to Nevada's clean water funding efforts have decreased by 48.3 percent since the Clean Water SRF was fully implemented in fiscal 1991 and 66.2 percent when adjusted for inflation.

Nevada withdrew from its leveraging program after interest rates rose beyond its ability to justify bond purchases. Now the state is reexamining its program to "see how we want to structure leverage...if we want to leverage at all." – Morris Kanowitz, Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Water Quality: According to EPA's most recently released assessment, 61 percent of the state's river miles suffer from impaired water quality.

Job Creation: One billion dollars in federal infrastructure investment leads to approximately 47,500 new jobs. Addressing Nevada's currently listed wastewater infrastructure needs would spur 11,751 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



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