



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

JAN 15 2009

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OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL
AND INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnston
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20460

Dear Administrator Johnston:

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) is grateful for your efforts to promote sustainable water infrastructure. We are also very appreciative of the support you gave LGAC as we worked together to produce the DVD, *Water Infrastructure- Successful Strategies for Local Leadership*.

The LGAC is enthused by the prospect that an economic stimulus package might soon be enacted containing substantial assistance for "ready to go" water and wastewater construction projects. We urge EPA to ensure that the Agency responds favorably to this immediate funding opportunity to provide jobs in the construction, engineering, and environmental compliance industries that will also help replace the crumbling water infrastructure in this country.

We also urge the following actions:

- **EPA work** with Congress and OMB to allow flexible and innovative funding options with "less strings attached" to such funds for state and local governments.
- **Consider** the needs of small and mid-size communities as well as those of large jurisdictions so the needs of all are equitably met.
- **Because of long standing funding limitations**, states and local governments may be challenged to "turn around projects" in 120 days or less. We strongly urge EPA to provide information necessary to convey the need for flexibility in timing of project bidding and completion.

Frances Eargle
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- **Consider** more grant opportunities versus loans for states and local governments in utilizing these funds to address their most immediate and critical infrastructure needs.
- **EPA continue** to consult closely with the LGAC as a key advisor in assisting the Agency as you move forward with this issue
- **Further study** of establishing a dedicated funding source for water and waste water infrastructure through the creation of National Water Trust Fund to address the long term needs of our country's environmental needs beyond the proposed stimulus package.
- **To the degree possible**, give some consideration for infrastructure projects that are "green" or promote green jobs.

We believe that this is a prime time to go beyond the usual way of doing business; to consider innovative ways of moving these dollars out into the communities trusting and knowing that local governments will do the right thing. The process that led up to the production of the DVD was somewhat of a risk, but what a great success for EPA and local governments.

We appreciate your consideration in this matter as you have done so graciously in the past. Please do not hesitate to call upon the experience of this advisory committee in moving forward so that what you envisioned and began during your tenure will continue in years to come.

Sincerely,



Paula Hertwig Hopkins
Chair, Water Workgroup



Roy Prescott
Chair