



# Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2012 Report to Congress

## Summary

EPA is submitting to Congress and publishing on its website the *Clean Watersheds Needs Survey 2012 Report to Congress* (CWNS 2012), a comprehensive analysis of capital investments necessary to meet the nation's wastewater and stormwater treatment and collection needs.

The report documents needs of \$271.0 billion as of Jan. 1, 2012. This includes capital needs for publicly owned wastewater pipes and treatment facilities (\$197.8 billion), combined sewer overflow (CSO) correction (\$48.0 billion), stormwater management (\$19.2 billion), and recycled water treatment and distribution (\$6.1 billion).

## Background

The CWNS 2012 is a collaborative effort between the states, the District of Columbia, U.S. territories and EPA. From January 2012 through December 2012, states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and other U.S. territories collected and provided data for the report.

While EPA's goal is to collect needs for a 20-year timeframe, states do not generally have documentation that demonstrates needs that far in the future. As a result, nearly all needs included in this report are within five years (2012-2017).

Needs in this report include the unfunded capital costs of projects that:

- address a water quality or a water quality-related public health problem existing as of Jan. 1, 2012, or expected to occur in up to the next 20 years; and
- meet the CWNS documentation criteria that includes: (1) a description and location of a water quality or water quality-related public health problem, (2) a site-specific solution to the problem, and (3) detailed cost information to implement the solution.

If the need did not meet the above documentation criteria, the need was not included in the CWNS.

The needs figure above typically represents capital needs for up to a 20-year period as reflected in state and local planning documentation for publicly owned wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities, combined sewer overflow correction, and stormwater management.

## About Changes in Documented Needs

The total documented needs decreased from \$338.1 billion in CWNS 2008 to \$271.0 billion in 2012 (in constant January 2012 dollars) for a total decrease of \$67.1 billion, or 20 percent. The largest portions of this decrease are associated with secondary wastewater treatment (Category I) needs (\$15.6 billion decrease, or 23 percent below 2008), CSO correction (Category V) needs (\$24.1 billion decrease, 33 percent), and stormwater management (Category VI) needs (\$28.7 billion decrease, 60 percent).

States' needs can change for a variety of reasons, such as actual changes in needs, availability of documentation, and ability to fund and staff data collection and entry efforts.

States most commonly indicate the following reasons for decreases in their documented needs:

- Planning documents with shorter implementation schedules or lower-cost projects due to limited municipal budgets and other factors.
- Completion of major projects.
- Difficulty obtaining documentation that substantiates the proposed solution and costs of needed projects for known water quality issues.
- State-level decision to reduce level of effort to document needs due to other priorities and/or staff reductions.

States most commonly cite the following reasons to explain increases in documented needs:

- More protective water quality standards and enforcement actions require and clearly document the need for improvements at treatment plants to increase the level of treatment.
- Aging pipe networks increasingly require rehabilitation and replacement.
- States increase their level of effort to complete the survey, improve coordination between agencies and departments, and increase outreach to communities.

## **Benefits**

Projected improvements, 2012 through 2032, if all needs in this report are met:

- The number of nondischarging facilities and facilities that provide secondary or more advanced treatment is projected to increase by 4 percent from 14,691 to 15,242.
- The population being served by those facilities is projected to increase by 24 percent, from 234.1 million to 290.3 million.
- Overall, EPA projects that a total of 15,280 operational facilities will serve a future population of 294.9 million people, or 79 percent of the U.S. population.

## **Additional Information**

Visit [www.epa.gov/cwns](http://www.epa.gov/cwns) for the CWNS 2012 and relevant data.