



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 02 2016

The Honorable Robert Cope
Local Government Advisory Committee
206 Courthouse Drive
Salman, Idaho 83467

OFFICE OF WATER

Dear Mr. Cope:

Thank you for your December 11, 2015, letter to Administrator Gina McCarthy on behalf of the Local Government Advisory Committee concerning the wastewater needs of small and rural communities, and the efforts of the Decentralized Wastewater Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) Partnership. The Administrator has requested that I respond on her behalf.

I share your view that decentralized systems can provide many small communities with affordable, safe and reliable wastewater collection and treatment. I also appreciate your support of the Decentralized MOU Partnership. As a key driver to the formation of the Partnership, the EPA is very pleased with its growth and accomplishments since its inception in 2005. Now eighteen strong, the Partnership includes even more members focused on small and rural communities, as well as a wider array of associations representing professionals who build and service homes and decentralized systems.

The Partnership is uniquely positioned to inform and educate organizations and individuals across the country about decentralized systems and related management and performance practices. As a member of the partnership, the EPA is committed to efforts to develop materials for organizations interested in considering, planning or implementing decentralized systems for community wastewater treatment needs, and to develop a public awareness effort to promote improved system performance and management.

The EPA is also taking steps to address the pricing and funding constraints that limit many small communities' abilities to improve wastewater infrastructure. The EPA maintains a "Funding for Septic Systems" section on our website at <http://www.epa.gov/septic/funding-septic-systems>. We plan to build on this tool and add resources to share best practices for financing the repair, replacement, and upgrade of decentralized systems using a variety of funding options, such as Clean Water State Revolving Funding loans, tax exempt bonds, and public private partnerships.

The EPA is also working with States to bring new technologies into use faster and improve competition. The advanced onsite data sharing agreement signed last year by Chesapeake Bay Watershed states is one example of this effort. This novel agreement, the first ever in the wastewater industry, simplifies the approval processes for onsite technologies in each individual state and is expected to reduce costs to manufacturers and homeowners. The EPA Region 1 is working with

the states in New England to develop a similar data sharing process and the Agency is exploring other ways to replicate this model agreement more widely.

Again, thank you for your letter. If you have further questions, please contact me or your staff may contact Frances Eargle in the EPA's Office of Congressional and Intergovernmental Relations at eargle.frances@epa.gov or 202-564-3115.

Sincerely,



Joel Beauvais
Deputy Assistant Administrator