



Empowering Communities, Advocating Solutions.

MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT

Federal funding for water quality improvement programs in the FY 2009 budget

THE PROMISE OF CLEAN WATER

35 years ago, with the passage of the Clean Water Act (CWA), Congress made a promise to protect and improve our nation's water quality for current and future generations. Since the adoption of the CWA, clean water infrastructure investment has made significant improvements to local water quality, but significant investments are still needed, as forty percent (40%) of our nation's accessed waterways fail to achieve standards. *The 110th Congress must direct adequate financial resources and oversight to achieve the goal of making our nation's waters acceptable for fishing and swimming.*

Clean water is advanced through various federal grants and loan programs to reduce threats to our nation's waters, such as sewage contamination and polluted storm water runoff. Full-funding for federal programs to assist state and local governments in fulfilling the promise of the Clean Water Act should be a top priority. *Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) urges the 110th Congress to adopt and appropriate the following budget recommendations for clean water in FY 2009.*

1. CLEAN WATER STATE REVOLVING FUND (SRF)

Sewer systems throughout New York and Connecticut are aging and failing; resulting in degraded local water quality. The Clean Water SRF was created by Congress in 1987 to provide grants and zero or low interest loans to municipalities for construction of wastewater treatment systems. SRF programs help finance non-structural projects to prevent and reduce stormwater pollution. In 1996, Congress passed the Safe Drinking Water Act, which created a separate SRF for drinking water treatment and protection of surface and groundwater drinking water supplies. SRF programs are essential to providing the investment needed to upgrade and maintain our wastewater infrastructure.

Increased investment of \$500 billion over the next 20 years is necessary to meet current clean water and drinking water infrastructure needs. The economic and environmental benefits of expanding the Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water SRF programs are fiscally responsible and help expand domestic markets. According to the National Utility Contractors Association, the SRF programs generate 400,000 jobs annually, not including jobs dependent upon clean water and open beaches, such as the fishing, boating, and tourism industries. *CCE recommends funding the Clean Water SRF at \$1.1 billion and the Drinking Water SRF at \$866 million for FY 09.*

2. NON-POINT SOURCE MANAGEMENT PROGRAM, CWA SECTION 319

Through a grant process, this program funds the implementation of pollution reduction programs, including, technical and financial assistance, public education, professional training, demonstration projects and water quality monitoring. Non-point source pollution is often the primary cause behind degraded local water quality. Non-point pollution contaminates drinking water supplies, increases beach closures, causes fish kills and limits recreational opportunities. *CCE recommends funding CWA Section 319 program at \$220 million in the FY 2009.*

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3. GREAT LAKES PROTECTION AND RESTORATION

The Great Lakes hold the key to the region's economic health, recreational opportunities, and quality of life. The lakes supply millions with drinking water; generate clean, renewable hydropower; support multi-billion dollar industries such as fishing and tourism; and are home to countless species of wildlife. *CCE recommends funding critical programs specifically aimed at Great Lakes protection and restoration, including, but not limited to, Great Lakes Legacy Act at \$54 million, Great Lakes Fish and Wildlife Restoration Act at \$16 million, Chicago Sanitary and Ship Canal Barrier at \$6.5 million, and Great Lakes Fishery Commission at \$21.8 million in the FY 2009.*

4. LONG ISLAND SOUND PROTECTION

As an Estuary of National Significance, the immense value of the Long Island Sound cannot be overstated. Twenty million people live within 50 miles of the Sound's beaches. Residents of New York and Connecticut depend on the Sound for recreational opportunities, including fishing, sailing, and swimming. LIS is also a critical component to a healthy regional economy, generating \$8.25 billion annually. *CCE recommends fully funding critical programs to protect Long Island Sound, including the Long Island Sound Study at \$40 million and the Long Island Sound Stewardship Act at \$25 million in the FY 2009.*

5. BEACH ACT GRANT PROGRAM

Established in 2000, the BEACH Act provides grants to states and local partners to support beach water testing and public notification programs. Regular information on beach water quality helps to protect the public from swimming in polluted waters and can help communities identify problems with their wastewater treatment systems. Our nation's beaches provide considerable economic benefits, memorable family experiences, and popular tourist and recreational destinations. Unfortunately, many of our nation's beaches are polluted with bacteria and viruses posing a significant threat to public health. In 2006, pollution prompted more than 25,000 beach closings and swimming advisory days at ocean, bay and Great Lakes beaches, including 1,500 from NYS and CT. Public access to water quality at our beaches is a public health right. *CCE recommends funding the Beach Act Grant Program at \$40 million in the FY 2009.*

6. TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD (TMDL), CWA SECTION 303(D)

TMDL is the CWA program to restore the integrity of our nation's waters. Through TMDL, states and the Environmental Protection Agency identify all sources of water quality impairments to rivers, streams and lakes that fail to meet water quality standards. In addition to identifying sources of water pollution, the TMDL program develops specific goals and implements planned designs to reduce pollutant loads to receiving water bodies. TMDLs must be consistent with the CWA, be compatible with related water quality programs and regulatory processes, and lead to real improvements rather than paperwork delay. *CCE recommends funding the State Program Management Grants (CWA section 106), which funds the TMDL program, at \$220 million in the FY 2009.*

JUSTIFICATION

Every New York State and Connecticut community is in the watershed of a major water body, such as the Niagara River, the Great Lakes of Erie and Ontario, the St. Lawrence River, the Mohawk, the Chesapeake Bay, the Hudson River, the New York City reservoir system, South Shore Estuary and the Long Island Sound. Our water resources provide drinking water for millions of residents, habitat for fish and wildlife, extraordinary recreational opportunities, and support billion dollar industries. Long Island Sound alone contributes \$8.3 billion to the regional economy, and Great Lakes Fisheries alone contribute \$4.5 billion to the economy.

CCE STRONGLY SUPPORTS FULL FUNDING OF CLEAN WATER PROGRAMS TO PROTECT AND IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN THE FY 2009 BUDGET

Citizens Campaign for the Environment (CCE) is an 80,000 member, non-profit, non-partisan advocacy organization working to protect public health and the natural environment in New York State and Connecticut.