



Thanks to significant state and federal investment in wastewater treatment in the 1970s, New York's waters are among the cleanest in the nation. Today, however, many of the state's wastewater plants have outlived their design lives, and there are indications that water quality is beginning to be impacted. New York has directed substantial funding toward infrastructure improvement and replacement, but as more plants reach this point, the need for additional funding becomes more critical.

Under Governor George E. Pataki, the Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP) program has committed more than \$260 million, mostly in 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond Act funds, to expansions and upgrades of wastewater treatment systems. This past year alone, New York awarded more than \$12 million through the WQIP.

New York's smart management of the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) has leveraged this federal funding source to provide communities with more than \$10 billion for the planning, design, and construction of water quality projects. CWSRF wastewater treatment projects that closed in the fiscal year of 2004, including all short term and long term loans, totaled more than \$1 billion.

Despite New York's resourcefulness, we, like other states, rely on full federal funding of the CWSRF to achieve the infrastructure improvements that protect our water quality. Currently, the federal budget is tight, and available loan funds fall short of our projected needs. Those of us in the water protection community need to be persuasive in our cry for assistance for wastewater treatment.

Municipalities, too, are faced with tighter economic constraints, as well as ensuring that their aging facilities continue to function effectively to protect public health. We must find ways to better explain to rate-payers the importance of investing in community infrastructure, and rally the public to be supportive.

Even in this time of leaner funding, local governments have a number of opportunities to get financial assistance, which you will read about in this issue. For example, the visionary New York State Water and Sewer Infrastructure Co-funding Initiative coordinates a

variety of funding sources from state and federal agencies and helps communities obtain optimum funding packages to accomplish their objectives. In 2004 there were 43 co-funded wastewater treatment projects ranging from \$263,500 to \$25,858,100.

The common goal that unites us all is to protect New York's water quality and public health through effective, up-to-date wastewater treatment. To accomplish this, we must do all we can to secure federal support, enhance state assistance, and foster strong local commitment. I appreciate the opportunity to work with all of you in achieving this goal.

Call for Water Quality Improvement Projects

Each year, the Division of Water offers a competitive call for Water Quality Improvement Projects of various types. Originally developed to administer 1996 Clean Water/Clean Air Bond funding for water quality projects, the WQIP now coordinates with other agencies to integrate the application, selection, and contract administration processes for numerous funding sources and project types, and we are working to develop additional funding sources. Applicants submit a single application, and the WQIP process matches the greatest number of good projects with appropriate funding. The next call for projects will be winter 2005. For more information, see www.dec.state.ny.us/website/bondact/bamenu.html#wqipapp.

Thirty-Year Water Quality Trends Report Released

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) recently released the "Thirty-Year Trends in Water Quality of Rivers and Streams in New York State Based on Macroinvertebrate Data, 1972-2002." The report is a sequel to a 1993 report that examined water quality trends from 1972 to 1992. The report documents the water quality status and trends for more than 900 rivers and streams statewide. For copies of the report, contact the NYSDEC, 625 Broadway, Bureau of Water Assessment and Management, Division of Water, Fourth Floor, Albany, NY 12233-3502.

—Sandra L. Allen
Director of the NYSDEC Division of Water



Call for Awards!

NYWEA offers a variety of awards that are presented annually to deserving candidates in recognition of outstanding achievement in the water environment profession.

Nominate yourself or pay tribute to a member; it is one of the most rewarding benefits of membership!

Contact the NYWEA Executive Office at 315-422-7811 for more information.