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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

Water & Wastes Digest is published exclusively for the 85,000+ decision makers in the municipal and industrial water, wastewater and water pollution industries. These individuals actively design, specify, buy, operate and maintain the equipment, chemicals and services used for water treatment. Editorial content in this audited publication highlights new products and technologies concerning the supply, collection, treatment and distribution of drinking water; the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater; and hazardous waste pollution control. A product directory is included in the annual June Buyer's Guide.

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Use It Responsibly

Last month one of *WWD's* readers sent an e-mail in regard to one of my editorials on water conservation. His comments made a strong impact.

"What I've come to realize is that water conservation for a small community is a double-edged sword," he wrote. "Wasting a valuable resource is wrong, and we need to encourage conservation. On the other hand, it costs real dollars to provide a safe and plentiful supply of water to a small community, and those costs are borne by our ratepayers. Too little conservation and we could exhaust our supply; too much conservation and we could price ourselves out of existence."

If I may add to this reader's comment, lack of funding is not just a reality for small water systems. Small, medium and large systems alike are under increasing pressure to improve aging treatment technology and distribution systems to deliver safe water to the public. Additionally, in water-stressed areas of the U.S., communities are challenged to find alternative water supplies in order to meet increasing demand due to continuous droughts and growing population.

According to the American Society of Civil Engineers, the U.S. faces a shortfall of \$11 billion annually to replace aging facilities and comply with safe drinking water regulations.

On Feb. 17, President Obama signed the economic stimulus bill, also known as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, into law. The total cost of the stimulus bill is approximately \$787 billion. The bill contains \$2 billion in funding for drinking water infrastructure; \$4 billion for wastewater utilities; \$1.4 billion for rural drinking water, wastewater and waste disposal projects; and \$4.6 billion for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for new projects to improve flood protection, navigation, hydropower and the existing water resource infrastructure and completion of current water projects.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has released a state-by-state list of the stimulus distribution for Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving funds. The funds will likely be distributed to various community projects through the existing Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund programs in the form of loans and grants. Funding will target those "ready-to-go" projects that can begin construction within 120 days of receipt of funds.

The outcome of the economic stimulus bill was watched closely by many in our industry. In anticipation that the money might become available, some local municipalities have been submitting lists of projects that could use those dollars since late 2008. Then there are the skeptics who criticize that this bill will only increase the burden of the country's already huge national debt.

For the hopeful in the water industry, the package will help jumpstart and sustain the U.S. economy, put construction workers back on the job, create sustainable jobs to help protect our country's public health and our environment and fast-track 400 wastewater projects valued at \$6 billion, which otherwise would have remained on hold due to lack of funding.

I am encouraged that our government did not overlook the water industry in this historically aggressive recovery and reinvestment act, but I also hope that the money is spent wisely and responsibly.



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- AWWA Show Preview
- Workforce Planning
- Pumps
- Membranes
- Aeration
- Pipe Inspection