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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.

# Stimulus Status: Where Are We Now?

No one likes taking inventory—it is a tedious and rarely rewarding process. It is time, however, that we take a closer look at the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) and determine if the hefty \$787-billion stimulus package has been successful so far in jump-starting the economy.

It has been just over seven months since President Obama signed the stimulus package, which includes \$12 billion for water projects. Since Feb. 17, we have braved unemployment rates exceeding 9%; stomached the Buy American Provision, which was feared to delay major water projects; tracked U.S. EPA waiver revisions to the Buy American rule in hopes of speeding up completion of stimulus projects; and seen numerous rounds of stimulus funding across the country. So where are we now?

Currently, federal stimulus funds are helping New Jersey and Pennsylvania complete much-needed clean water and wastewater projects. Work has already started on a \$4.3-million project to update Atlantic City, N.J.'s water delivery system. Overall, New Jersey has received approval for more than \$200 million in funds for about 60 shovel-ready projects.

EPA provided \$37,750,000 to the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources was awarded \$669,600 in an effort to improve water quality and create jobs.

Seven Kansas communities, including Lakin and Hoisington, will receive a total of \$25.2 million in federal grants and loans for local water projects.

The Alabama Department of Environmental Management will receive \$63,321,600 to help the state and local governments finance many of the overdue improvements to water projects that are essential to protecting public health and the environment across the state.

... And the list goes on.

While these reports only offer a big-picture status report of the stimulus package, there has been an increasing number of success stories for both water and wastewater projects across the country. For example, \$16 million in ARRA funding will finance the construction of a new wastewater plant in Live Oak, Calif., which will ensure that the city remains in compliance with wastewater discharge standards.

Nevertheless, the true measure of success for one of the largest single government expenditures in U.S. history since the Great Depression remains unknown. While the Obama administration says the stimulus money has helped curb layoffs and offered more help to those who are unemployed in the form of extended benefits, close to 216,000 jobs were lost in August, according to [www.abcnews.com](http://www.abcnews.com).

Still, I would like to remain optimistic. Let's not forget that so far the federal government has distributed only about 10% of the stimulus money.

I hope that when all is said and done and the money has filtered down to the states, the stimulus package will prove successful and not only give our economy the much-needed boost, but also address long-overdue improvements to water and wastewater projects essential to protecting public health and the environment.



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