

SCCGW PRIORITIES IN REFERENCE TO OWRC FOUR YEAR ACTION PLAN

Ohio Water Resources Council Strategic Plan WATER RESOURCE INFRASTRUCTURE

Water, wastewater, stormwater, combined sewer overflows and watershed protection or management infrastructure play a critical role in the strength of the economy and public health by ensuring clean, safe water for Ohio's citizens, businesses and industries. Infrastructure includes not only physical structures such as waterlines, sewers, decentralized on-site water and wastewater systems, water and wastewater treatment plants, but it also includes non-physical measures such as best management practices and water conservation to protect and restore valuable water resources – streams, lakes, groundwater, and wetlands. Infrastructure can be owned by public, private, profit, non-profit, and investor-owned entities. Local entities can be public, private, profit, non-profit, and investor-owned.

The public often overlooks the importance of infrastructure until an event like a waterline failure or untreated sewage enters a waterway. Despite repeated episodes which attract public attention, many local officials remain reluctant to significantly increase user charges needed for infrastructure maintenance, rehabilitation and improvements. This reluctance persists despite other evidence that the public is willing to pay for clean water, such as the increased purchases of bottled water (which is more expensive than tap water). Consequently, the prices and expenditures on infrastructure hardly reflect the true cost of providing clean, safe water. Building technical,

financial and managerial capability at the local level, strengthening planning and management coordination among all levels of government, and defining needs, sources of funding, and shortfalls of financing for infrastructure have been identified as a strategic issue.

In many instances, new and replacement construction, rehabilitation and maintenance of critical infrastructure have been postponed, resulting in infrastructure deterioration. At the same time, demand for new infrastructure in developing areas has outstripped existing capacity. The problem is compounded by increasing costs to meet new federally mandated regulations to reduce certain pollutants, inadequate planning and the trend towards the federal government providing less investment in infrastructure. Small commercial systems and individual property owners in rural areas not served by public water and sewer also have a responsibility and need to maintain the private infrastructure for water supply and wastewater treatment on private properties. These private, decentralized systems represent a different challenge for local government for compliance, monitoring, and maintenance. Addressing these infrastructure challenges is critical to ensure clean, safe water for public health and continued economic development through sustainable water management.

Objectives

1. Build local technical and managerial capability.
 - Educate local public officials as to the full cost of clean, safe water.
 - Consistently define local capabilities and target assistance
 - Strengthen assistance to local officials
 - Identify mechanisms to meet local financing needs
 - Maximize available public funds and achieve multiple programmatic needs
 - Increase sustainable water management for economic development
 - Enhance watershed management programs
2. Strengthen local coordination and planning
 - Evaluate existing planning mechanisms to develop and implement regional water resource infrastructure planning models.
3. Identify needs, sources of funding and shortfalls of financing for water, wastewater, storm water, combined sewer overflows and watershed infrastructure.

* - denotes SCCGW involvement

BOLD - denotes some direct activity by SCCGW

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Objs.	Action (Program / Initiative)	Indicator / Measure	Lead* and Supporting Agencies	Resources 1. complete with existing 2. develop/identify to complete 3. new needed
1	Coordinate training on the new HSTS rules for private infrastructure interests (service providers & professional associations).	Training provided	ODH* Ohio EPA	
1	Coordinate efforts to target entities for assistance and support for improving management capabilities. Promote self-assessment by Public Water Supplies of their technical, managerial and financial capabilities and investigate rules for existing systems to require assessment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop of associations and organizations conducted: approach for coordinating and targeting resources developed. - Measures for improved management capabilities developed. - Five entities successfully use the approach and their management capabilities are improved. 	OWDA* and Ohio EPA* OPWC, ODH, ODNR	1
2	Conduct forum on feasibility of regional infrastructure planning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Forum conducted - Workgroup formed to identify models and a potential pilot project. - Pilot project is tested. 	OWDA* and Ohio EPA* PUCO, ODOD, OPWC, ODH, ODNR	1
3	Form an interagency committee to identify the “universe” of water resource infrastructure needs and sources, and to estimate the shortfalls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Committee Formed - Needs identified - Sources identified - Estimate established 	OWDA* and Ohio EPA* PUCO, ODH, ODNR	1

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