



News & Notes

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DEP Releases CY06 Draft Intended Use Plan for State Revolving Loan Fund / Alerts State Needs Outpace Available Dollars

The State Revolving Loan Fund provides 20 and 30-year low interest loans to Massachusetts communities to finance drinking and wastewater construction projects. On the wastewater side, the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) identified over \$1.3 billion in total needs for Clean Water construction projects. The DEP draft list for FY06 proposed \$337.87 million for wastewater projects, including 39 new construction projects, eight carry-over projects and 28 planning projects. On the Drinking Water side, the DEP identified \$622.46 million in drinking water infrastructure needs. The draft list proposed \$100.76 million for funding, including 13 new construction projects and five carry-over projects. Clearly the needs of the Commonwealth outpace the amount of available dollars. Further information on the SRF program can be found at: www.mass.gov/dep/water/index.htm.

Federal Cuts Continue

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF), a loan program that helps local communities repair and replace aging treatment plants, has been the primary source of federal support for clean water infrastructure projects since its creation in 1987. Since it was established, the CWSRF program has helped fund over \$52 billion in projects, providing more than 16,700 low-interest loans. In 2004 alone, the CWSRF helped fund \$4.6 billion in high priority projects such as wastewater systems, non-point source pollution control, estuary management and a range of projects focusing on water quality. The Bush Administration's budget proposal cuts the CWSRF to \$687 million, a level that is just over half of the \$1.3 billion Congress had been providing for several years through FY04. Industry and environmental groups are disturbed by the cuts in the CWSRF due to the state of the industry and the gap between need and funding levels expected over the next few years.

EPA, DEP and MWRA Agree on Holistic Approach for CSO Control

With the Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO) Program accounting for just over 40% of all future planned capital spending, the Advisory Board has pushed for a holistic approach for CSO controls. An agreement has been reached and the plan, as filed with U.S District Judge Richard G. Stearns, freezes levels of control and additional expenditures on the Charles, Alewife, South Boston and East Boston basins and provides a series of five three-year variances for the Charles and Alewife basins. While the plan's cost has risen from the \$398 million in the 1994 Conceptual Plan to the FY07 level of \$783.6 million. This long fought victory will control spending over the next 15 years, allowing the Authority to reach closure on the final scope, schedule and benefits of the long term CSO Program and to address other capital priorities.

Advisory Board Seeks Gubernatorial Candidate's Positions Regarding Funding Via Questionnaire

To better understand their positions on the Commonwealth Sewer Rate Relief, Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds and DEP Grants, the Advisory Board submitted a questionnaire to all the announced gubernatorial candidates. Further, the Advisory Board extended an invitation to the candidates to appear at an Advisory Board meeting to present their positions. Unlike Governor Romney, the next Governor must play an active role in the fight for increasing Debt Service Assistance.

Advisory Board Reaffirms Position on Blue Hills Covered Storage Project

At its March 16 meeting, the MWRA Advisory Board noted the importance of the Blue Hills Covered Storage Project and stated that any further increases to the program, such as the replication of wetlands, would be absorbed within the existing \$33.2 million budget.

Upcoming Meetings/Events

- April 4 – System Expansion Committee Meeting**
9:30 am – Newton City Hall, Room 202
- April 4 – MWRA Public Hearing on FY07 CEB**
6:30 pm - Boston City Hall
- April 12 - MWRA Board of Directors Meeting**
10:00 am - Charlestown
- April 21 - Advisory Board Executive Committee Meeting**
8:30 am - Advisory Board office
- April 27 - MWRA Advisory Board Meeting & FY07 CEB Public Hearing**
11:30 am- Cary Memorial Library, Lexington

If you have any questions regarding topics raised in this newsletter or any other MWRA issue, please contact:

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