



ADVOCACY UPDATE

4th Annual Legislative Fly-In a Big Success

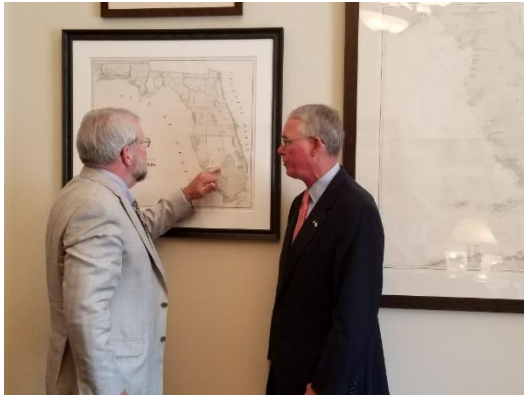


Figure 2: Bob Himschoot of Crews Environmental meets with his congressman, Rep. Tom Rooney (R-FL)

On May 2 & 3 approximately two dozen NOWRA members from all over the country travelled to Washington DC for the association's 4th Annual Legislative Fly-In. The purpose of the Fly-In is to meet with lawmakers on Capitol Hill and at Federal Agencies to educate them on the benefits and advantages of onsite and decentralized wastewater treatment and to encourage them to enact laws and policies which will benefit the onsite wastewater industry.

Face-to-face meetings with our elected officials at any level is invaluable, and NOWRA's national lobbying firm (which is located in DC) ensured that the attendees representing our industry had ample opportunity to make their concerns and hopes known to lawmakers in their own state as well as officials at federal agencies.



Figure 1: Matt Lee of Aquatest, Inc., meets with a staff member of Sen Maria Cantwell (D-WA)

Following a morning briefing held in a hearing room in the Rayburn House Office Building, NOWRA representatives held roughly 50 meetings. Most of them were with members of the House and Senate, including many with members of the four committees which regulate and provide funding for water and wastewater: the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, and both the House and Senate Appropriations Committees. Several Fly-in attendees also participated in meetings with EPA's Office of Wastewater, USDA's Rural Utilities Service(RUS), and the President's Council on Environmental Quality (they coordinate Administration environmental policy across all federal agencies). Following the meetings, participants attended a dinner at a local restaurant for a de-briefing discussion of their visits.

NOWRA had several goals for its congressional visits:

1. Get Congress to preserve funding for Section 319 funding from EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund and for USDA's Rural Utilities Service water and sewer funding (both have been zeroed out in President Trump's budget.)
2. Ask US House Members to join the Decentralized Wastewater Recycling Caucus
3. Support NOWRA's proposed legislation -- the National Onsite Wastewater Recycling Act -- which requires EPA to report to Congress on the successes and obstacles it faces funding decentralized wastewater treatment, and requires small communities to self-certify that they have considered all wastewater treatment options before



Figure 4: Mark Shepard of Quality Septic meets with a key aid to Rep. Kevin Yoder (R-KS)

making a decision about treatment.

NOWRA wishes to thank all of the NOWRA members who participated in this year's Fly-In. The Fly-In participants who provided feedback to NOWRA's leadership all agreed that the effort to come to DC was worthwhile and actually enjoyable. They learned that as constituents of the Congressional offices they visited, their comments were

taken seriously and remembered. Mark Shepard of Quality Septic (near Kansas City) noted that the staffer from Rep. Yoder's office remembered him from the year before and even quoted some of the things Mark had shared with him during his visit to the office during last year's Fly-In!

Do you know that over the last 30 years Congress and the EPA have given states more than 100 billion dollars in grants and loans to address wastewater treatment issues, and that 99.7% of this money has been directed to centralized (big pipe) sewage collection and treatment systems? Although Onsite/decentralized wastewater treatment systems serve 85 million Americans –25% of the country and 30% of new construction – they are virtually ignored when it comes to helping to fix the infrastructure issues faced by our industry. Attendees at the Fly-In were focused on this subject when speaking with the legislators that participated. NOWRA is

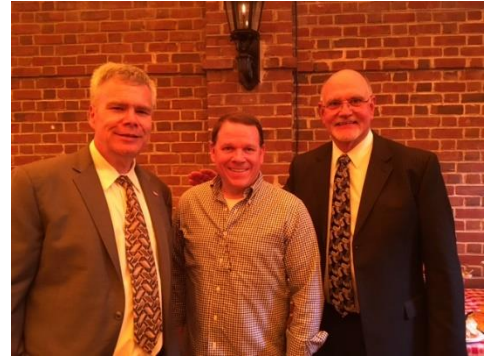


Figure 3: NOWRA President Jim Bell (right) and Executive Director Eric Casey (left) with Rep. Sam Graves (R-MO) at a fundraiser/barbecue for the Congressman. Rep. Graves is a co-sponsor of the Decentralized Wastewater Recycling Congressional Caucus.



Figure 5: NOWRA Board Member Joyce Hudson (center) with Tim Perrin (left) and Alan Wheat (right) of NOWRA's advocacy firm Polsinelli, LLC, Alan Wheat is a former congressman who leads NOWRA's lobbying team.

focused on promoting the importance and viability of onsite and decentralized wastewater treatment systems, and the need for a more equitable share of federal funding.

NOWRA members who are unable to attend our Legislative Fly-In can still support our efforts by reaching out to your elected Representatives and Senators to encourage them to support increased federal funding and for policies which favor increased use of onsite/decentralized technologies. If you are interested in this, you are welcome to reach out to NOWRA's Executive Director Eric Casey by [following this link](#).



Figure 3: Lobbying Board of Governors Chairman Tom Fritts of Residential Sewage Treatment Co. in Missouri addresses Fly-In participants during a dinner and de-briefing after the May 2 lobbying visits.