

NOWRA
3540 Soquel Ave., Ste. A
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
www.nowra.org

Phone: (831) 464-4884
Fax: (831) 464-4881



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS NEWS

NOWRA Supports *21st Century Water Infrastructure and Fiscal Stimulus Strategies*

NOWRA joined with industry and environmental stakeholders in supporting fiscal strategies for advancing sustainable approaches to water, stormwater and wastewater management. A collaborative letter, led by the Coalition for Alternative Wastewater Treatment and the Clean Water Fund, was sent to the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Appropriations Committees and the House Committee of Transportation and Infrastructure.

The fiscal strategies white paper referred to in the body of the letter below entitled *21st Century Water Infrastructure and Fiscal Stimulus Strategies*, is available on the News Release section of the NOWRA website.

January 2009

As the Appropriations Committee finalizes the FY09 spending bills and the new fiscal stimulus, we request that you consider the multiple benefits of restoring a strong research and development program in water infrastructure in the United States. As Joseph Stiglitz, former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers, recently stated: "Bail-outs, too, are aimed at correcting mistakes of the past, so they are backward-looking. We would be much better off spending our money forward-looking. If we spend \$700 billion on new technology and innovation, we'd have a stronger, new, real economy."

The US has experienced a dramatic reduction in water-related research funding in the federal government, as has been noted by both the National Academy of Sciences and the Office of Science and Technology Policy. The 1972 Clean Water Act authorized \$100 million in research, which would be worth over \$500 million per year in current dollars. However, starting in the 1980s, water infrastructure-related research budgets were systematically reduced, and private sector research spending declined as well.

It is vital for the US to return to earlier patterns of investment in water infrastructure-related research. Our nation is clearly falling behind in the efficiency and effectiveness of its approaches relative to those of other countries. Research investments will be paid back in many ways, including reductions in costs of safe and clean water systems, revitalized local economies and community development, and in new economic opportunities for American businesses in designing and manufacturing solutions for emerging markets in Asia and elsewhere.

As described in the attached White Paper, both federal agencies and research universities and institutes are fully-prepared to initiate R&D and pilot projects within 180 days, at a maximum. Research programs and agendas that have been underfunded in recent years could be quickly restored in federal agencies, and idle researchers could be reengaged.

We recommend \$200 million be dedicated to national research and development programs that are "lab-ready". Examples of these have been described in the White Paper. Thank you for your consideration of our request.

Coalition for Alternative Wastewater Treatment
Clean Water Action

Natural Resources Defense Council

American Rivers

Water Innovations Alliance

U.S. Strategic Water Initiative

National Onsite Wastewater
Recycling Association

Colorado School of Mines

Carnegie Mellon University

West Virginia University