

NEW JERSEY CLEAN WATER COUNCIL

**March 11, 2008
Meeting Highlights**

Location:

New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust Conference Room, 3131 Princeton Pike, Office Building 6, Suite 201, Lawrenceville, New Jersey.

Attendees:

Members: Ferdows Ali, Stan Cach, Russ Furnari, Amy Goldsmith, Pamela Goodwin, Tony McCracken, Lou Neely, James Requa, Jessica Sanchez, Tony Valente, Dan Van Abs and Ray Zabihach

Others: Chris Sturm, Rick Kropp, Helen Heinrich, Narinder Ahuja, and Gerry Skrajewski

The meeting was convened by Russ Furnari at 10:15 a.m.

APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2008 MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Dan Van Abs made the motion to approve the February minutes, and Ray Zabihach seconded the motion. The minutes were approved as distributed. Also, the January minutes were recommended to be approved as revised. Ray Zabihach made the motion to approve the minutes, and Jessica Sanchez seconded the motion.

DEP UPDATES:

Narinder Ahuja reported that the NJPDES Rules were signed, and they will be published in the March 17, 2008 Register. Public Hearings are scheduled for April 21st at the Rutgers Labor Education Center and May 8th at the Rutgers EcoComplex..

Stan Cach distributed handouts on the 2008 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS). The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires the State of New Jersey and other states to document the capital costs of municipal wastewater treatment and collection facilities and the costs to implement non-point source pollution controls. The data from the individual states is reviewed by USEPA for conformance with the Documentation Criteria and compiled to produce a Report to Congress, which will be entitled the 2008 Clean Watersheds Needs Survey (CWNS).

According to the USEPA, the 2008 CWNS Report to Congress will be the primary source for Congress to determine future state allocations for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) program. New Jersey currently receives the sixth largest share (about 4.13 percent) of the federal funds appropriated to the CWSRF program nationally. New Jersey's 2004 CWN are over \$13 billion. Over the years, the federal budget for the CWSRF programs has ranged from a high of \$2.4 billion to a low of \$689 million (for FFY2008). A mere 0.5 percent change in the State's share could cost New Jersey as much as \$5 million to \$10 million or more annually. Therefore, it is very important to provide a comprehensive and accurate account of our clean watersheds needs to Congress through this process. Response to this survey is critical so that New Jersey continues to receive its fair share of the available monies.

The CWNS survey is a national assessment of the water pollution control needs. It estimates the capital costs to upgrade, expand, and/or construct publicly owned wastewater treatment facilities on a facility-by-facility basis. In addition, the costs to implement non-point source (NPS) pollution control needs from agricultural cropland sources, animal sources, silviculture, urban sources, groundwater protection (including unknown source), marinas, resource extraction (mining, quarrying), brownfields, storage tanks, sanitary landfills, hydromodification, and individual/decentralized sewage treatment; and the costs to manage the pollution from confined animals-point sources, mining-point sources, recycled water distribution and estuary management are also to be reported to Congress.

With any needs reported, we require a copy of the backup documentation sent to us so we can forward it to the USEPA for their review. The content of the backup documentation includes (1) the description of the water quality or public health problem, (2) the location of the problem, (3) the solution to the problem, (4) the cost for each solution, (5) the basis of the cost, and (6) the total cost. Finally, we are looking forward to receiving your response by Friday, May 16, 2008 or as soon as possible thereafter. Responses received after September 15, 2008 may not be able to be included in the Report to Congress.

A discussion was held regarding “Assessing Needs”. The needs to improve, preserve the water environment, or meet water quality standards over the next 20 year horizon should be included.

Article published in the Trenton Times on February 25, 2008, regarding “Governors appeal to feds for help on fixing infrastructure” was distributed.

Narinder commented that the federal allocations for SRF are shrinking and are grossly inadequate to meet the State’s infrastructure needs. At the ASWIPCA Conference, which he attended, all states expressed frustration and disappointment over these cuts. Efforts to have the funding levels restored are continuing. A Water Trust Fund to meet the water infrastructure needs of the nation is being pursued. The current draft includes consideration of many different revenue sources (including fee on bottled beverages) to raise at least \$10 billion per year.

The issue of pharmaceuticals being found in water was discussed. It was recommended that Eileen Murphy come and speak at a Clean Water Council meeting in the future. Rick Kropp said that 5 years ago we didn’t have the technology to detect the pharmaceuticals, but today we do. The DEP is funding studies to see how components affect the process. The Department should be addressing the realities of drugs in our water.

Dan said that we have to get away from the “whack a mole” mentality. We need to have technologies in place to monitor the whole class of contaminants.

Rick Kropp reported that Critical Area 1 is done and is on the Web. Critical Area II report is being completed and will be done in 3 – 6 months.

OLD BUSINESS:

Public Hearing “Water Infrastructure” – The Ad-Hoc Committee distributed handouts to the CWC members. One handout was from Dan Van Abs and Chris Sturm; one from Russ Furnari; one from Amy Goldsmith; and there was a draft letter, prepared by Jessica Sanchez, to the Commissioner regarding the “Recommendations Derived from the CWC’s 2007 Public Hearing on New Jersey’s Water Infrastructure”. In the letter, there are several points which have been identified to summarize the issues. Overall the 4 key issues are:

- **Build assets in the right place for the right reason with redevelopment as a priority.** Communities may have to utilize consolidation of services in the future. Many communities already have shared services and that realizes into a tax break for their customers. Issues include the need to understand infrastructure limits and needs regarding redevelopment, not just in urban areas but also in older suburbs.
Use financial and human resources to protect the resources we rely on. Make sure the design of systems going forward are the most efficient that you can have. There is low impact development technologies; other types of reuse that are a part of total management; and as you look at that, you can increase the development in areas that have issues and reduce the stress on ecos, stormwater, etc.
- **Manage assets based on performance standards while minimizing life-cycle costs.** Based on some of the very good comments from CCMUA, the ACUA and some others, there are organizations out there that are doing a good job of managing their assets; identifying how things will work and how to manage those pieces efficiently; and using that planning and assessment to really run an efficient operation. They make use of the Infrastructure Trust and Fund, but also manage so that their rates do not go up, and they make provisions for the future.
- **Relying on reserves to handle all maintenance and replacement costs and bond only for the largest infrastructure projects.** In part, over time, reserves have been built to be able to handle certain maintenance cost from those reserves, but there was a Legislative change that was made that allowed municipalities to take those reserves and apply them to other needs which had not been allowed previously. This is an issue that should be corrected.

NEW BUSINESS:

The Goals for 2008 will probably be realized by following through on the 4 major issues identified in the letter to the Commissioner. Also, after the meeting with the Commissioner, we can focus on what issues we may want to consider for this year's Public Hearing which will be held on October 15th.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

A Conference is scheduled on April 3 and 4 at which the NJ/NY Harbor Consortium, which was formed in 97/98, will discuss their project to apply industrial ecology techniques to developing pollution prevention programs for various pre-identified toxics or issues in the harbor.

Because of the expected demise of the Department of Agriculture, a hand-out with facts about the Department of Agricultural and why New Jersey is called "The Garden State", etc., was distributed. If you feel it is appropriate, please write letters to the Legislature.

There is a Workshop at Rutgers on April 15th regarding Impacts on Climate Change on Water Resources.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 p.m. with a motion from Ali Ferdows, and it was seconded by Amy Goldsmith.

**** The next meeting of the Clean Water Council will be on April 8, 2008, beginning at 10:00 A.M., at the NJ Environmental Infrastructure Trust, Building 6, Suite 201, 3131 Princeton Pike, Lawrenceville, NJ ****