



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

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OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL AND
INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

The Honorable Stephen L. Johnson
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Johnson:

The Local Government Advisory Committee (LGAC) fully supports the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) efforts to promote sustainable water infrastructure. In meeting the myriad challenges of sustaining water resources, state and local governments are at the frontline and should have a decisive role in deriving and implementing solutions. Furthermore, the public expects the sustained delivery of clean and safe water to homes, communities, institutions, and businesses.

In recognizing this very important role of state and local leadership in implementing sustainable water infrastructure strategies, the LGAC has produced a DVD and five case studies of successful local strategies. These products highlight the importance of leadership at the local level, and the urgent need to address them now in preparing for the future.

In addition, the LGAC has identified some key concepts for EPA to consider in working with local governments. While there seems to be no local consensus on the right funding streams and management schemes to address them, the LGAC encourages EPA to engage in further dialogue with state and local government officials. This dialogue could explore collaborative approaches to overcome barriers and find innovative solutions toward achieving sustainable water infrastructure.

The following are some key areas the LGAC finds that may be important for EPA to consider:

➤ **Social Marketing on the Critical Need of Managing Water Infrastructure-** EPA should continue to promote the social, public health, and economic benefits of clean and safe water. While water is critical to the health and growth of communities, the cost of clean and safe water has risen significantly, and most communities may or may not have budgeted adequately for future demands. Furthermore, the public does not fully understand the costs of providing clean and safe water, as well as the

challenges and barriers of meeting these needs. EPA should step up efforts to work with states and local governments to bring full awareness of the challenges in the 21st century in meeting water resource needs. EPA should, through its varied cooperative conservation efforts, highlight and market ways in which individual communities and homes can help to sustain water resources and participate in citizen efforts to enhance water infrastructure.

- **Highlight and Learn from Local Governments that Are Making Advances in Water Infrastructure Management-** The LGAC has provided five case studies where asset management is working. More examples, especially case studies where small and disadvantaged communities, are needed that have successfully demonstrated planning and investments that have accomplished community goals and objectives more efficiently and effectively.
- **Foster Local and Regional Strategic Planning Processes-** EPA should continue dialogue with state and local government officials to explore innovative approaches. Strategic regional planning efforts, combining resources of local investments and centralized planning, could be useful areas to explore with local communities that could be more cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive.
- **Translate Four Pillars of Sustainable Infrastructure into Community and Local Action-** EPA has articulated the four pillar strategy: better management, full-cost pricing, water efficiency, and watershed approaches. Local officials need these four pillars translated into concrete actions that can be taken at the state and local level as a companion to the federal strategy.
- **Local Government involvement is key to planning for sustainable water infrastructure-** The LGAC DVD and case studies highlight key issue areas to raise awareness at the local government level. We strongly recommend that EPA distribute this DVD and case studies to select groups such as NACo, ICMA, and other organizations, and make this important tool available to state and local governments, communities, civic organizations, etc.
- **Shift the Paradigm from Cost to Investment-** Local governments have long viewed water infrastructure as a cost for running a locale. For communities to make significant advances in planning for the future, the paradigm needs to shift to regarding water infrastructure as an investment for future growth similar to financial asset management.

The LGAC would again like to commend EPA's efforts to address this most critical and relevant environmental challenge of the 21st century to ensure the public will have clean and safe water. We also would like to commend EPA's Office of

Water for sponsoring the Sustainable Water Infrastructure Conference to be held in Atlanta, GA, March 21-23, 2007.

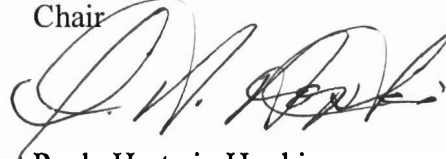
This conference will provide a great opportunity for open dialogue to explore innovative solutions for sustainable infrastructure. Achieving this goal will be no small undertaking, but intergovernmental collaboration on this issue will be the key to success for all communities. Making strides to engage state and local officials will be a win-win for the environment and toward EPA's goal of furthering intergovernmental collaboration.

The LGAC commits its support to achieving this very important goal. This Committee stands by ready to advise and assist the Agency on how best to partner with state and local governments toward advancing a sustained future of clean and safe water for all our Nation's great communities.

Sincerely,



Roy B. Prescott
Chair



Paula Hertwig Hopkins
Chair, Water Workgroup