

APPENDIX E: A Strategic Response to a Changing Climate

In September of 2008, the National Water Program published a *Strategy* for responding to the impacts of climate change on clean water and drinking water programs (see www.epa.gov/water/climatechange/). Key goals of the *Strategy* are to help water program managers recognize the impacts of climate change on water programs (e.g. warming water temperatures, changes in rainfall amounts and intensity, and sea level rise) and to identify needed adaptation actions.

The *Strategy* identifies 46 specific “key actions” to help water programs adapt to a changing climate. Most of these actions address adapting to climate change impacts, while others addresses opportunities for mitigating release of greenhouse gases, improving research of climate change and water issues, and educating water program professionals about climate change challenges.

The National Water Program began implementing response actions in 2008 and will continue this work in 2009 and 2010. The Office of Water published a report describing progress in implementing progress in implementing the *Strategy* in January of 2009 (see <http://www.epa.gov/water/climatechange/implementation.html>).

The National Water Program has several major goals for climate change related work in the next several years:

- Continue strong implementation of the key actions in the *Strategy* not completed in 2008 or 2009;
- Revise and update the *Strategy* in 2009 and implement revised or new key actions in 2009 and 2010;
- Expand cooperation with states and tribes in defining climate change impacts on water programs and more actively assist state, tribal, and local governments in addressing key adaptation challenges, such as protecting water quality, protecting coastal and freshwater wetlands, and making water infrastructure “climate ready”;
- Expand cooperation on climate change issues with other federal agencies involved in water management, including the Corps of Engineers, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, the Department of Interior, and the Department of Agriculture.
- Develop and implement new mechanisms to foster communication concerning water and climate change research among EPA, other federal agencies, water research foundations, and other interested parties.