



## **Principles for Identifying Sustainable Water Infrastructure Projects**

**Fix existing needs first.** We should prioritize stimulus dollars for rebuilding and maintaining existing infrastructure. Across the nation, roads and bridges need repair; existing water and sewer systems need replacement; and treatment plants need upgrades to meet existing water quality standards. Expansion of new capacity should be a much lower priority, for two reasons. First, our conventional patterns of investment in sprawling infrastructure drive up energy consumption, making the nation less economically competitive in the global marketplace. Second, every unit of new capacity implies a future maintenance expense. Fiscal responsibility calls for getting our existing house in order before expanding future liabilities.

**Stimulate industries to create green jobs.** We should stimulate a decisive shift to clean energy sources and the efficient use of both water and energy. Programs to retrofit public buildings for greater water and energy efficiency could produce thousands of jobs, strengthen American businesses, and improve our quality of life.

**Don't waste money:** Spending money wisely means investing in multi-purpose solutions that lower costs and provide more benefits. In many cases, green infrastructure and water efficiency provide significant savings over traditional solutions such as sewer pipes and new reservoirs. Indianapolis will save \$300 million on its sewer upgrades by using green infrastructure which to capture and store runoff that would otherwise enter the sewer system.

**Let nature do the work:** Rivers, streams, wetlands, floodplains, and forests provide a suite of critical services like clean water and flood protection, and should be viewed as essential and effective components of our water infrastructure. The reason New York City has great quality tap water is because the city invested in water protection by purchasing land around its Catskills reservoirs rather than by building expensive treatment plants. That strategy ensured that polluted runoff from roads and lawns doesn't enter the water supply and saved the city over \$6 billion in capital and maintenance costs.

**Enhance community safety and security:** Traditional infrastructure isn't designed to handle the increased floods and droughts that come with global warming, so we need a modern approach to protect public health, safety, and quality of life. Green solutions give communities the flexibility and security they need. Napa, California, solved flooding problems by choosing to restore the Napa River's natural channel and wetlands, rather than lining the river with concrete. The effort has protected 2,700 homes and prevented \$26 million in flood damage each year.

### **Support projects that reduce negative impacts from existing infrastructure:**

Municipal and roadway stormwater projects, wastewater projects, restoration projects, and efficient transportation and buildings should be a priority. Retrofitting urban landscapes that contribute to stormwater inundation and pollution problems presents a significant opportunity for job creation and economic development. In addition, our public lands face a number of critical

issues from crumbling infrastructure to unused or obsolete forest roads in need of remediation or maintenance to addressing fish passage. Funding projects on public lands with stimulus funds will not only provide a number of environmental benefits but will also assist many rural communities.

**Invest in environmental restoration, protecting ecosystems while creating good jobs:**

Restoring wetlands, floodplains, stormwater hydrology, and healthy forests can employ substantial numbers of people and provide tangible long-term economic and environmental benefits. Removal of the Elwha Dam, for instance, would generate 1150-1240 jobs, \$60-65 million in business activity and \$32-34 million in personal income in Clallam County over the 10-year pre-construction, construction and restoration period. After removal, 446 annual jobs, \$4.6 million in annual payroll in the recreation/tourism sector and an annual increase in local sales taxes of \$296,000 would be generated. Well designed projects can also help protect communities from future floods and droughts.

**Reject projects that would increase global warming pollution, destroy important natural areas, or encourage wasteful water use.** We should avoid projects that would expand our reliance on coal and oil, exacerbate global warming, or destroy important ecosystem services like drinking water and flood protection, since all of these undermine the nation's competitiveness over the long term. Public transit, renewable energy, efficiency, and clean water infrastructure can supply jobs across multiple sectors of the economy without these negative impacts. We have an opportunity to invest in low impact development retrofits or flood plain restoration projects which may be lower in cost, create jobs, and provide cost-effective strategies for managing water resources.

**Take the time to identify and invest in the right projects.** Investing in the right projects is as important – perhaps ultimately more important – than spending funds in six months. While speed has value, it is worth deploying the stimulus package carefully within the Congressionally-mandated timetable and guidelines, laying the groundwork for sustained economic growth.