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## Infrastructure Funding for People & Rivers Advocacy Tips for the Delaware River Watershed

Investments made by the Clean Water State Revolving Funds in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware have been crucial to improving access to basic wastewater services. They have also reduced pollution to the Delaware River and paved the way for a historic cleanup that has ensured nearby river access for some of the East Coast's largest urban centers. However, among the communities living in the watershed, there are deep disparities in who has access to affordable wastewater service, clean rivers, and a healthy environment.

With the passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act in 2021, a huge infusion of funding is now available, via the State Revolving Funds, to improve clean water access for communities. Yet

despite the magnitude of this investment, it is still not enough to ensure clean rivers and affordable water service for everyone. This means that public engagement and transparency around community benefits are more important than ever, particularly in the places where the need is greatest.



SCHUYLKILL RIVER, PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

### What advocates can do:



**Educate yourself:** Use the [State Revolving Fund Advocacy Toolkit](#) to understand important background on the federal program, and to access email and letter templates and key contact information. Review the Study of Equity and Green Investments through the [Delaware River Watershed State Revolving Funds, 2009-2021](#) to understand details of our regional programs, how funds have flowed historically, and what barriers exist to equitable green investments.



**Take action locally:** Meet with your utility and local decision-makers. Ask about their plans for [green, climate-resilient infrastructure](#) (especially plans to eliminate combined sewer overflows), and if they plan to use federal infrastructure funding to leverage local dollars. Suggest restoration projects. Help connect utilities with technical assistance programs such as the University of Maryland's Environmental Finance Center, the Delaware Basin Funding Navigator, and state programs. Share information with other local advocates.



**Take action at the state level:** Meet with your [State Revolving Fund managers](#) and state decision-makers. Comment on Intended Use Plans. Seek transparency about which communities are benefiting most from federal investments, and what those benefits look like. Request that projects be prioritized based on the full suite of benefits, including climate resilience and access to clean rivers. Request proactive outreach and information sharing to community groups.



**Take action regionally and nationally:** Seek more federal funding in the form of grants for urban river cleanup and elimination of combined sewer overflows. Ask the Environmental Protection Agency how they plan to ensure that distribution of the new federal infrastructure funds is done in compliance with the Civil Rights Act. Seek federal water bill assistance programs such as the [Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program](#).