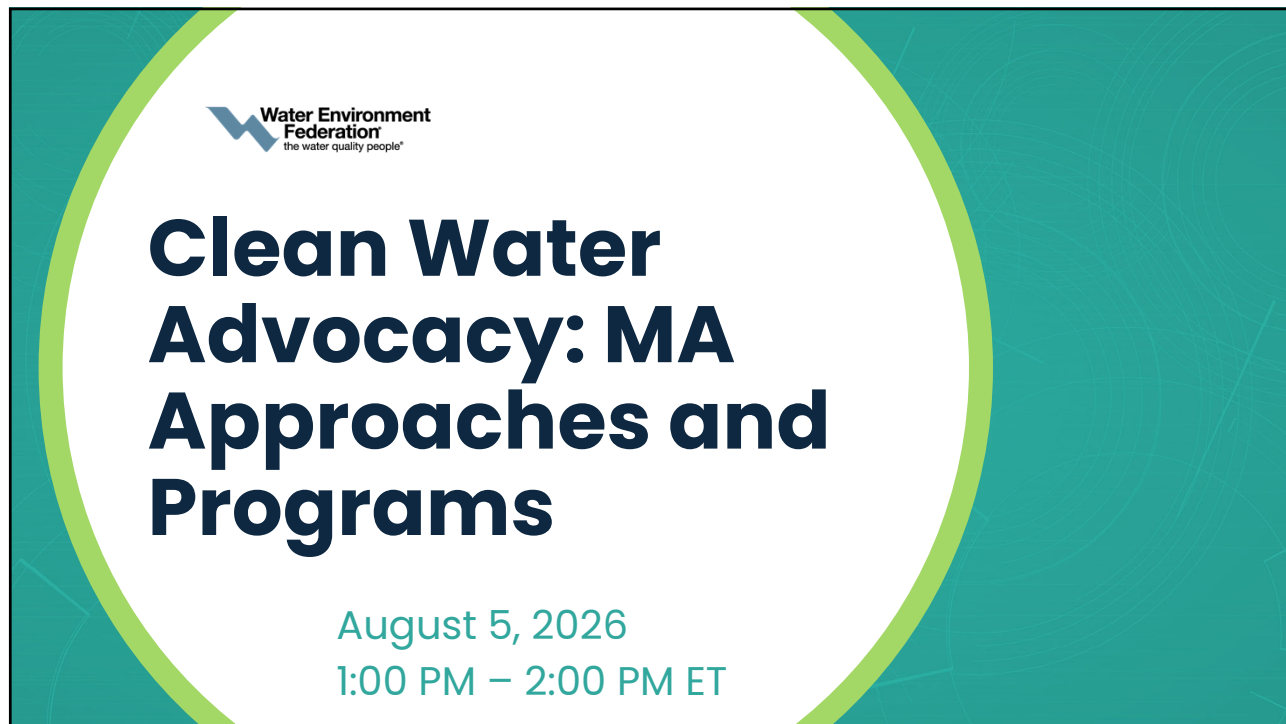




1

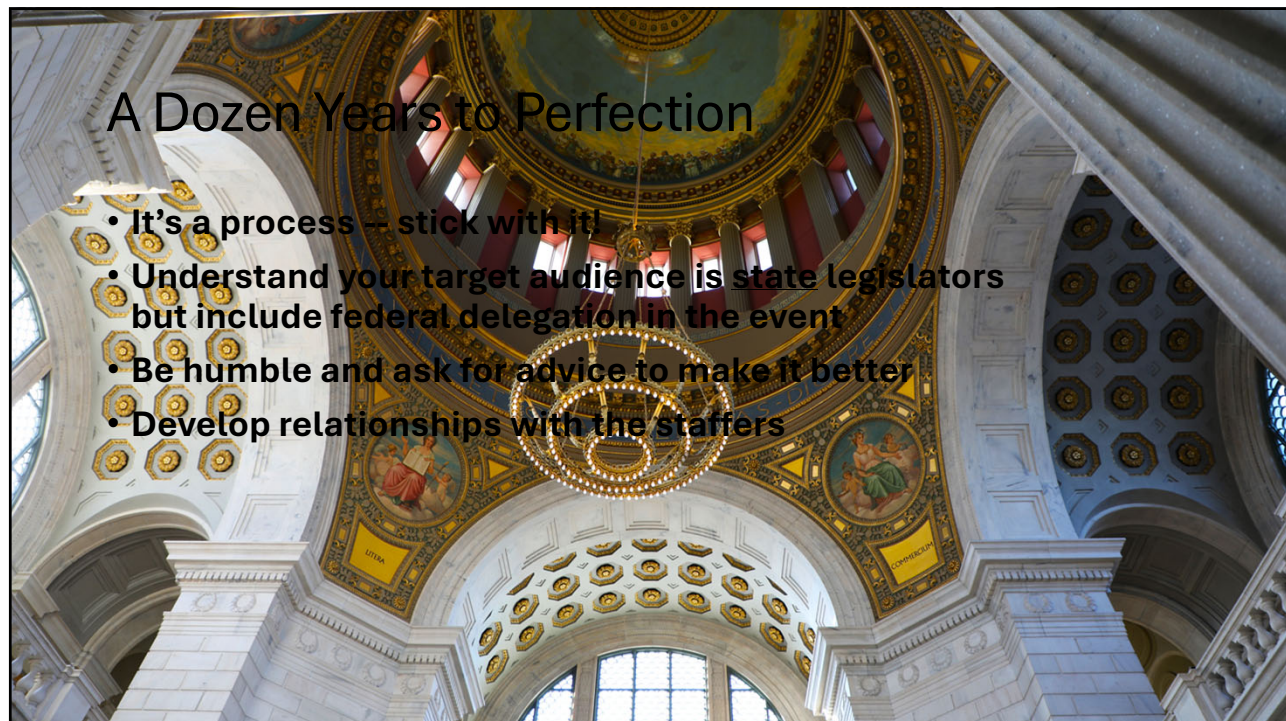
Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions – Mary Barry
- Rhode Island Legislative Advocacy Program – Janine Burke-Wells & Peter Connell
- Central States WEA Advocacy Program – Matt Streicher
- WEF Government Affairs & Regulatory Update – Steve Dye
- Audience Q&A
- Closing Remarks – Emily Prescott

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3



4

The Invite

- Save the Date
- Follow up with agenda and more details



Rhode Island Clean Water Legislative Summit 2022

Thursday, March 31st 2-4pm
 Rhode Island State House
 House of Representatives Lounge

"Clean Water Legislators of the Year"



Speaker of the House
Joseph Shekarchi



Representative Lauren Carson



Senator President
Dominick J. Ruggiero



Senator Dawn Euer

Topics Include:

- Funding Critical to Clean Water Infrastructure
- Resiliency and Climate Change Impacts
- Non-point Pollution Sources
- Contaminants of Emerging Concern
PFAS and Microplastics
- Difficulty with so-called Flushable Wipes
- Managing Biosolids and the NEED for long-term plan/policies
- Cybersecurity

Join us to **CONGRATULATE** your colleagues and **DISCUSS** issues affecting water, wastewater, and storm water important to Rhode Island communities

Sponsored by and Special Thanks to:




Representative Thomas Noret
Representative Camille Vella-Wilkinson

The Rhode Island Clean Water Association and the New England Water Environment Association are non-profit professional associations established in 1952 and 1929 respectively. Our members are members of YOUR communities whom you will find to be very knowledgeable and helpful when it comes to dealing with water pollution issues. NEIWPCC was founded in 1947 by an act of Congress with a governing body representing all six New England states and New York and a mandate to help the states preserve, protect, and advance the quality of their precious water resources.

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Our Tactics and Lessons Learned

- Get a Sponsor, Go to the Capitol
- Give out awards!
- Schedule the event earlier in the session
- Prepare handouts and display materials they can touch
- Engage leaders in a panel discussion
- Promo Open Houses and Clean Water Week



State of Rhode Island
GUBERNATORIAL PROCLAMATION

**Water Resource Recovery Operator
Appreciation Day**

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island is blessed with numerous water resources; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the Ocean State rely on clean surface waters for sources of drinking water, business and recreational activities, and healthy natural environments; and

WHEREAS, 120 million gallons of household, commercial, and industrial wastewater are produced, collected, treated, and discharged every day in Rhode Island; and

WHEREAS, this wastewater is treated to very stringent standards set by the Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management to protect the receiving waters of the State and Narragansett Bay, even providing for reuse; and

WHEREAS, the water resource systems and their employees in communities around the State, through the delivery of reliable and high-quality services, play a critical role in reducing water pollution and protecting public health; and

WHEREAS, the operators and staff of Rhode Island's wastewater collection and treatment facilities work 24/7 year-round to perform a job that is largely unseen; and

WHEREAS, Clean Water Week 2026 is April 12-18, and celebrates the value of water in our daily lives and the public water utilities workers whose essential efforts directly contribute to the quality of life in Rhode Island.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Daniel J. McKee, Governor of the State of Rhode Island, do hereby proclaim April 13, 2026, as **Water Resource Recovery Operator Appreciation Day** in Rhode Island and encourage all residents to celebrate the important role that wastewater treatment, and those who operate and maintain our state and local investments in clean water infrastructure, play in our communities.




Given under my hand and the seal of the Office of the Governor of the State of Rhode Island, this 17th day of April, 2026.

Daniel J. McKee
Governor

Craig M. Amore
Secretary of State

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The Event

- Have a script, different people speaking
- Do a demonstration
- Give out award(s)
- Have a panel discussion including legislators
- Leave behind handouts
- Provide snacks and drinks
- Leave time for informal discussions and networking!



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The Handouts



2026 Clean Water Legislative Summit

To discuss current and future issues affecting water, wastewater and storm water infrastructure; to inform and educate legislators about clean water issues important to Rhode Island communities.

Wednesday, February 4, 2026 – 1 to 3 pm
Rhode Island State House, House Lounge

1 PM: Welcome and Opening Remarks
 Master of Ceremonies: Peter Connell, RICWA Past President
 Nora Lough, RICWA President
 Representative Thomas Norri
 The Honorable Senator Jack Reed (via video)
 The Honorable Senator Stephen Whitehouse (via video)
 The Honorable Representative Seth Magaziner (via video)
 The Honorable Representative Gabe Arno (via video)

1:15 PM: Presentation of the WEF Public Official Award to Speaker Shekarchi
 Representative K. Joseph Shekarchi, Speaker of the House
 Representative Terri Cortvriend
 Terry Gray
 Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
 Joseph Gonsky, Ph.D. PE
 Carroll D. & Charles M. Bilmeyer Professor, URI
 Jim McCaughey
 Narragansett Bay Commission

1:30 PM: Roundtable Discussion on Clean Water Issues in Rhode Island
 Senator Alana DiMorio
 Representative Terri Cortvriend
 Terry Gray
 Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management
 Joseph Gonsky, Ph.D. PE
 Carroll D. & Charles M. Bilmeyer Professor, URI
 Jim McCaughey
 Narragansett Bay Commission

RHODE ISLAND CLEAN WATER ASSOCIATION – United for Clean Water since 1952
www.ricwa.org



Rhode Island Clean Water Priority Issues for 2026

Biosolids – Rhode Island needs a long-term plan for the management of solids from WRRFs and onsite septic systems. These “biosolids” are generated by our residents (57 pounds per Rhode Islander per year are disposed of according to <https://www.biosolidsdata.org/>). Rhode Island relies almost primarily on incineration. The state landfill takes limited amounts. Bristol has the only remaining composting operation. There are currently no other options for managing these materials, the equivalent of 45 tanker trucks per day coming from the 19 WRRFs in Rhode Island! The Narragansett Bay Commission is leading a regional biosolids planning effort which should be emulated, expanded, and supported.

Workforce Development – Working in the Clean Water Industry can be a very rewarding career. The industry needs employees with a variety of skill sets to build, operate and maintain the critical infrastructure for protecting public health and the environment. This clean water workforce must be supported through training/certification programs and compensation that reflects the importance of this essential service.

PFAS – Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) are a class of chemical contaminants of great concern to clean water professionals. Water Resource Recovery Facilities (WRRFs) are receivers of these chemicals and, unfortunately, are not currently designed to remove PFAS. The PFAS that are removed end up in the wastewater solids – a plan for managing these materials and incentives for new technologies to destroy them is essential. **Source reduction** is the key and most cost-effective public policy for dealing with PFAS. The producers of PFAS should be responsible for the costs of clean up, not local utility rate payers.

Cybersecurity – WRRFs are vulnerable to cyber attacks (see [Narragansett Bay Commission](https://www.narragansettbaycommission.org/2020/06/25/cybersecurity/) paid \$250,000 to end cyberattack <https://www.wisconsinjournal.com/story/2022/03/22/cybersecurity/> story from 2022). WRRFs require attention and funding to ensure no interruptions in service or, worse, sewer overflows and environmental impacts.

Infrastructure Funding and Resiliency – The State of Rhode Island must continue to support drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater projects with grants and matches of federal funding. Much of the State's existing infrastructure is nearing the end of its useful life and will need replacement. Municipalities need State and Federal funding to support this important work.

Nonwoven Disposable “Wipes” Products Ban – RICWA supports federal legislation to require “Do Not Flush” labels on wipes and other products that cause sanitary sewer overflows and other problems for sewer systems.



Rhode Island Clean Water Association

United for Clean Water since 1952
www.ricwa.org

The Rhode Island Clean Water Association (RICWA) is a non-profit group of water quality professionals formed in 1952. The organization is comprised of nearly 500 members dedicated to promoting public awareness and education on clean water and environmental interests that include: wastewater treatment, biosolids management, critical infrastructure, and emerging contaminants.

Activities We Sponsor and Support

- Training & Professional Development
- Networking/Information Transfer
- Scholarships/Training Grants
- Rhode Island Clean Water Week
- Operations Challenge
- Community Clean Ups
- Science/Engineering Fair
- Awards and Recognition

YOU ARE INVITED

April 12 - 18, 2026 is Rhode Island Clean Water Week and RICWA will be sponsoring Open Houses at several of the state's wastewater treatment facilities—the “**1000 IN 1000**” infrastructure that you pay for. You will be **IMAGED** as the process for making “clean water”! Go to www.ricwa.org for locations and details.

PLEASE CONSIDER RICWA AN INFORMATION RESOURCE!
 Our members are wastewater and public works professionals. We have first-hand knowledge and “hands-on” experience designing, operating, maintaining, and continually improving wastewater infrastructure in Rhode Island.

Nora Lough President Ed Hanon Vice President Kim Sandbach Secretary Tracy Santoro Treasurer

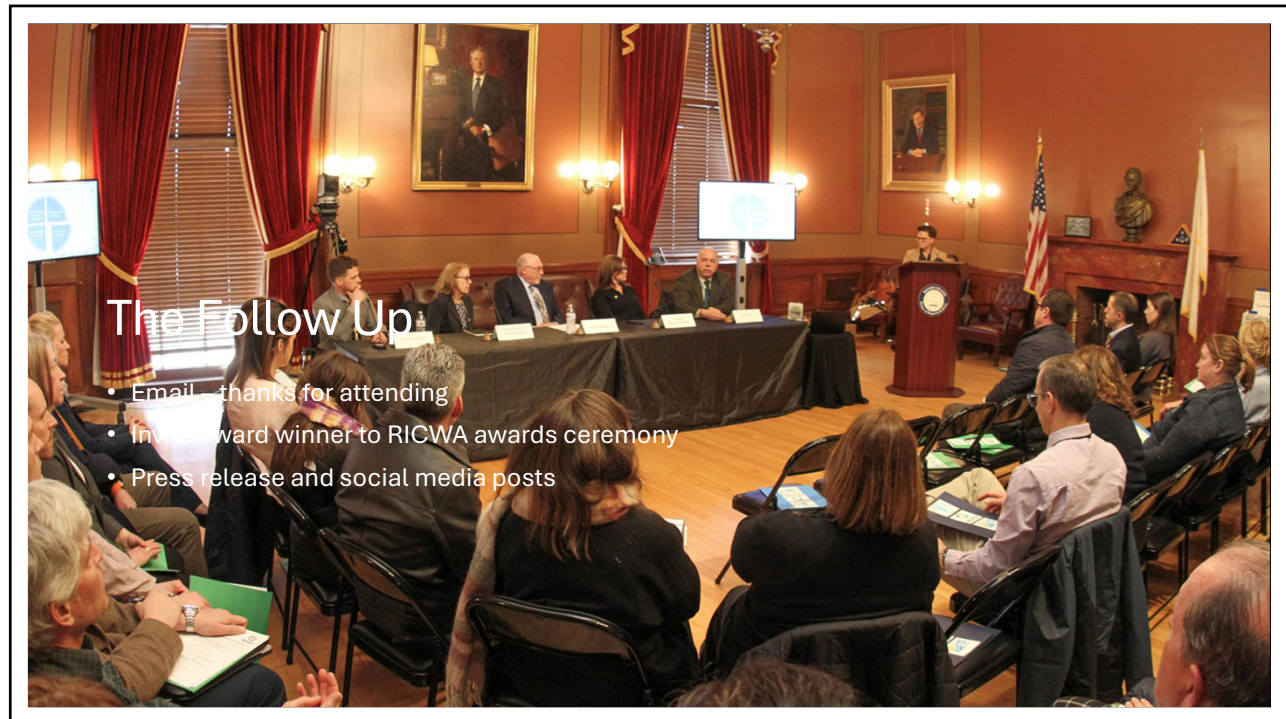
Find us on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/ricwa) [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/ricwa)

PLUS: Handouts from Sponsors

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Recognizing Legislators

2023 Award Winner Representative David A. Bennett

ABOUT THE AWARD

Purpose of the Award:
The Clean Water Legislator of the Year Award is presented to an elected or appointed public official that has made a documented, significant contribution in the areas of clean water legislation, public policy, government service, or another area of public prominence that resulted in improvements to ensuring clean water for Rhode Island.

The Award:
A Clean Water Legislator of the Year Award trophy.

Frequency of the Award:
Yearly or as deserved.

Eligibility for Award:

- Nominees must be in an elected or appointed office, and do not need to be a member of RICWA.
- Significant contribution that resulted in ensuring clean water for Rhode Island.

Submit:

- One-page biography of the nominee
- Listing of specific reasons for the nomination (two pages maximum) that relates to his/her work in improving the water environment, and any other supporting material that relates to the award criteria.

► [2024 Award Winners](#)

► [2023 Award Winners](#)

► [2022 Award Winners](#)

► [2021 Award Winners](#)

▼ [2020 Award Winners](#)

- 🗳️ [Senator Susan Sosnowski](#)

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Recognize Legislators for Their Efforts on Behalf of Clean Water!



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COVID Year

“Tried out” a virtual format in 2020

Not as effective

But that was the start of the slide show in the background

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Want to See for Yourself?

[2026 Clean Water Legislative Summit: 2-4-2026](#) (CapitolTV)

Questions? Contact:

Peter Connell

(peterconnell@verizon.net)

Janine Burke-Wells

(janine@nebiosolids.org)

COMING UP NEXT...

**2026 CLEAN WATER
LEGISLATIVE SUMMIT**

COX 61

i3 BROADBAND 15

ALSO STREAMING: WEB CHANNEL 4

CAPITOL TV

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Central States Water Environmental Association

Gov't Affairs Committee – IL Section

Government Affairs Community Member Association Focus Group

Matt Streicher, P.E., BCEE
Glenbard Wastewater Authority

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Central States Water Environmental Association (CSWEA) Background

- Founded in 1926, originally named Central States Sewage Works Association
- Predates WEF's founding
- Diverse membership; engineers, biologists/chemists, operators, lab technicians, academics, and government sector
- 3 distinct state sections Illinois, Wisconsin, and Minnesota
- Each section carries out tailored events, committees, and local training programs
- 2 main CSWEA Association events; Annual Meeting & Educational Seminar
- CSWEA Founded Global Water Stewardship (GWS) – an initiative focused on engineering sustainable centralized solutions and resolving sanitation issues in the developing world.

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IL Section CSWEA Government Affairs Committee



Summary of Committee:

- Definition: Study and maintain current information on federal and state legislative matters and trends that may impact wastewater treatment plants, collection systems, or stormwater systems.
- Share legislative information with Section.
- Realistically, we are a simple committee that is responsible for putting on an annual seminar

Events:

- Organize IL Section Government Affairs Seminar in conjunction with Illinois Association of Wastewater Agencies (IAWA)
- Participation in the WEF Government Affairs Committee Meeting at WEFTEC
- Attend or send a representative to the WEF Fly-in in Washington, DC annually.

Additional Goals:

- Organize quarterly webinars with other state sections for regional legislative updates, ethics requirements, etc.



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Illinois Section CSWEA Government Affairs Seminar



PURPOSE:

To bring together wastewater professionals, elected officials, regulators, industry leaders, and policy experts to discuss legislative, regulatory, and emerging issues affecting publicly owned treatment works throughout Illinois. The seminar is designed to keep utility leaders informed of changing laws, funding opportunities, environmental policy, and operational challenges that influence how wastewater agencies serve their communities.

FEATURED SPEAKERS:

- Current/Formers Legislators
- Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
- United States Environmental Protection Agency
- Workforce Development
- Consultants
- Financial Experts
- Members/Units of Local Government
- Other State/Federal Departments

TOPICS:

- NPDES Permit Updates
- SRF
- Emerging Contaminants
- Nutrient Reduction
- Water Reuse
- Grant Opportunities
- Regulatory priorities/issues



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2026 Seminar

Agenda:

- WEF Government Affairs Update
 - Steve Dye, Managing Director, Government Affairs & Strategic Partnerships, WEF
 - Fred Andes, Partner, Barnes & Thornburg
- Data Centers
 - Jen Walling, Executive Director, Illinois Environmental Council
- Water Pollution Control Loan Program Update
 - Nidhan Singh, Infrastructure Financial Assistance Section Manager, IEPA
- BABA
 - Kristin Ratajczak, Domestic Preference Team Lead, Office of Wastewater Management, USEPA

Past Notable Topics/Speakers

- Jim Durkin, Former Illinois State Representative, Speaker of the House
 - WIFIA Options for Wastewater Agencies
- IEPA
 - Water Quality Standards Section
 - Office of Energy
- Terra Fong
 - Water Division Director, USEPA Region 5
- Maine Water Environment Federation/Portland, Maine Water District
 - PFAS Efforts in the Northeast US
- Illinois State Archives Records Management Section
 - Office of the Secretary of State
- Illinois Fertilizer and Chemical Association
 - Lead Researchers on Cover Crop & Nutrient Management Practices
- WEF Fly-In
 - Brandon Koltz, Wisconsin Section CSWEA



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Key Takeaways from Seminars

- Government Affairs Directly Impacts Utility Operations
- Infrastructure Funding Opportunities Continue to Evolve
- Regulatory Requirements are Becoming More Complex
- Water Reuse is Becoming a Larger Conversation
- Workforce Development Remains a Critical Challenge
- Cybersecurity is Now an Operational Priority
- Utility Advocacy Matters
- Sustainability and Resource Recovery Continue to Grow in Importance
- Long-Term Planning is Essential



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WEF Regulatory Comments 2025-2026

Draft National Recommended Ambient Water Quality Criteria for the Protection of Human Health for PFOS, PFOA, and PFBS (4/16/25)

Draft Risk Assessment for PFOS and PFOA in Biosolids (8/13/25)

PFAS Data Reporting and Recordkeeping Under Toxic Substances Control Act (6/12/25 joint w/ AMWA/AWWA/NACWA and 11/6/25 joint w/ NACWA)

Updated Definition of Waters of the United States (4/16/25 and 1/5/26)

EPA 401 Certification Regulations (2/17/2026)

EPA Financial Capability Assessment (FCA) Guidance Document request for public input (5/26/26)

OMB Regulation for Financial Assistance Rule (7/13/26 joint w/ NACWA, AWWA, AMWA, NRWA, WRA)

Draft Guidance for Reducing Risk from PFOA & PFOS in Biosolids (comments due 9/4/26)

ELG for PFAS Manufacturers (expected in late 2026)

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House: FY27 Interior & Environment Appropriations Bill *(No Senate bill yet)*

FY27 I & E Approps.	CW SRF	DW SRF	Program	Amount
FY27 Base	\$1.2 Billion (-\$400B/FY26)	\$910 Million (-\$200M/FY26)	WIFIA	\$72 million
CDS	\$525 Million	\$506 Million	OSG	\$42 million
Cap. Grant after CDS	\$675 million	\$404 million	Workforce Development Grants	\$5 million
FY27 vs. FY26	-\$447 million	-\$215 million	Alternative Source Water Grants	\$5 million
			Stormwater Centers of Excellence	\$2 million
			Advanced Aquifer Use & Recharge	\$3.5 million
			Sect. 319	\$178 million
			Sect 106	\$226.4 million

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Senate WRDA Bill *(No House bill yet)*

Program	Amount
Clean Water SRF	\$3.5 billion
Drinking Water SRF*	\$4.125 billion
WIFIA	\$65 million
OSG	\$280 million
Workforce Development Grants*	\$15 million
Alternative Source Water Grants#	\$5 million
Stormwater Centers of Excellence	\$5 million
Advanced Aquifer Use & Recharge	\$5 million

* = increase over IIJA level; # = decrease over IIJA level

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Legislation

Priority Bills

- **Water Infrastructure Programs Reauthorization***
- **PFAS CERCLA Liability Exemption***
 - *H.R. 1267, the Water Systems PFAS Liability Protection Act -- 34 bipartisan co-sponsors*
- **WIPPES Act***
 - *S. 1092 & HR 2267, Wastewater Infrastructure Pollution Prevention and Environmental Safety (WIPPES) Act – passed Senate; awaiting House floor time.*

** = WEF Water Advocates Call-to-Action*

Additional Bills

- **Advancing Water Reuse Act, H.R.2940***
 - *Industrial Tax Credit for Reuse*
- **Water Infrastructure Resilience and Sustainability Act, H.R. 5566/S.3590**
- **Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program Establishment Act, H.R.4733**
- **Clean Water Standards for PFAS Act of 2025, H.R.6668**
- **Special Districts Fairness Act, S. 2014 and HR 2766**

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Become a water advocate today!

Share your story with congress, YOU are the water expert.



Current Campaigns:

- Reauthorization of Water Funding
- Advancing Water Reuse Act
- Benefits of Biosolids
- Water System PFAS Liability Protection Act
- WIPPES Act

Tell your colleagues, friends, & family too—membership not required.



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Get involved – speak up for water!

Join a WEF Community	Join a Member Association Committee	Attend the National Water Policy Fly-In	Attend WEFTEC
Attend national and local specialty conferences	Submit public comments	Educate your community	Contribute case studies and data to inform policy
Write a publication, article or fact sheet	Nominate someone for a scholarship or award	Share your water story	And more...



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Thank you!

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