



Support for SRFs, WIFIA, and State & Tribal Assistance Grants

Policy Summary

Safe drinking water and effective wastewater infrastructure are essential to public health, economic growth, environmental protection, and the states' ability to carry out delegated federal water programs. The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (SRFs) remain the most effective and flexible tools for delivering federal water infrastructure assistance because states administer them, set priorities through intended use plans, and can target funding where it is needed most. The Water Infrastructure Finance & Innovation Act (WIFIA) and State and Tribal Assistance Grants also play an important role, but they should complement, not displace, proven state-led programs.

The need remains substantial. EPA's most recent reports estimate over **\$630 billion** in clean water infrastructure needs and **\$625 billion** in drinking water infrastructure needs over the next twenty years.

WSWC urges Congress and the Administration to:

1. **Provide stable, adequate appropriations** for the Clean Water SRF, Drinking Water SRF, WIFIA, and State and Tribal Assistance Grants.
2. **Keep states in the lead** on identifying priorities and administering SRF assistance through intended use plans.
3. **Reduce unnecessary federal restrictions and set-asides** that limit flexibility, increase costs, slow project delivery, or make SRF assistance less effective.
4. **Use WIFIA to supplement, not replace, SRF funding.**
5. **Protect State and Tribal Assistance Grants**, including Performance Partnership Grants, that support primacy, technical assistance, source water protection, and related state program responsibilities.
6. **Avoid earmarks or other diversions** that reduce funding available for state priority projects.
7. **Support water workforce recruitment, training, and retention.** A growing wave of retirements and too few new workers threaten the staffing needed to operate and maintain water systems and protect public health.
8. **Allow qualifying drinking water and wastewater improvements to satisfy compensatory mitigation requirements** where legally appropriate and consistent with program goals.

The Western States Water Council (WSWC) is a government entity representing western state water agencies with members appointed by their respective governors. The WSWC's mission is to ensure that the West has an adequate, secure, and sustainable supply of water of suitable quality to meet its diverse economic and environmental needs now and in the future.

Core Message

Federal water infrastructure policy should put more dollars into actual projects, preserve state flexibility, and strengthen the proven programs that help communities deliver safe drinking water and clean water services.

Draft refresh of sunseting Position #496 for consideration at the May 2026 WSWC meetings. See also prior Positions #446, #364, and #404.

What WSWC Is Asking For

1. Maintain and strengthen appropriations for the Clean Water SRF, Drinking Water SRF, WIFIA, and STAG.
2. Preserve state authority to set priorities and manage SRF assistance.
3. Reduce federal mandates and restrictions that weaken SRF effectiveness.
4. Ensure new infrastructure initiatives do not come at the expense of SRF capitalization grants.
5. Support workforce development needed to build, operate, and maintain water systems.

Closing Statement

WSWC supports a strong federal-state partnership to help communities build, repair, and maintain essential drinking water and wastewater infrastructure. Congress and the Administration should provide stable support for SRFs, WIFIA, and STAG, preserve state flexibility, and support the workforce needed to make these investments succeed.

Nothing in this position is intended to alter or affect the authority of western states over the allocation and administration of waters within their borders, the implementation of delegated or primacy programs under federal law, or the interpretation or application of any interstate compact, court decree, international treaty, tribal settlement agreement, or state water law.

Supporting Documentation

Why This Matters

States and communities depend on reliable drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to protect public health, support economic activity, and meet federal clean water and drinking water requirements. If the federal government expects states and communities to meet those obligations, it should provide dependable financial and technical support.

EPA's most recent national assessments estimate about **\$630.1 billion** in clean water infrastructure needs and **\$625 billion** in drinking water infrastructure needs over the next twenty years. Those figures show the scale of the challenge and the continued need for strong federal-state partnership.

Why the SRFs Matter

The Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds are the backbone of federal water infrastructure assistance because they are state-administered, flexible, and built to provide recurring support for priority projects. They help finance planning, design, construction, rehabilitation, and replacement projects across a wide range of communities.

Why Flexibility Matters

Congress has added more conditions, set-asides, and directives to the SRFs over time. While many may be well intended, they can reduce flexibility, increase administrative burdens, raise costs, and divert funds from core infrastructure needs. Federal assistance should support the SRFs' primary purpose, not weaken it. Directed congressional earmarks can create the same problem by reducing funds available for state-identified priority projects.

Why WIFIA and STAG Matter

WIFIA is a useful financing tool, especially for large projects, but it should supplement SRF capitalization grants rather than compete with them. State and Tribal Assistance Grants, including Performance Partnership Grants, remain essential to state implementation of drinking water and water quality programs, including primacy, technical assistance, source water protection, capacity development, and support for small, rural, and tribal communities.

Why Workforce Development Matters

Infrastructure funding alone is not enough without the people needed to operate and maintain these systems. EPA's recent water workforce report highlights a growing challenge: about one-third of water utility operators may be eligible for retirement within ten years, while only a small share of the workforce is under age 24. Without trained replacements and enough overlap for mentoring and knowledge transfer, utilities risk losing system-specific expertise needed to maintain infrastructure and protect public health.