

SEWER AUTHORITY MID-COASTSIDE
Staff Report

Subject / Title

Manager's Informational Report

Staff Recommendation:

None. This is an informational item only.

Fiscal Impact:

None. This is an informational item only.

Discussion/Report:

Annual EPA Inspection

The plant's annual EPA inspection is scheduled for Tuesday, November 25, 2008.

Public Request for Funding Agreement Information

Staff is researching a question from the public concerning the funding agreement requirement for annual MWSD forecasts.

Manager Leave

Manager Foley will be on leave the week of December 29, 2008.

Articles from Water Environment Federation Publications:

Economic Stimulus Package Could Include Funding for Water Projects; WEF Letter Encourages Congressional Support

Last month, the House of Representatives approved a \$60-billion bill that sought to provide a total of \$7.5 billion for EPA water programs, including \$6.5 billion for EPA's clean water state revolving loan fund and \$1 billion for the drinking water revolving loan fund. Of that, EPA had discretion to use 1.5 percent for grants. But a related measure in the Senate stalled delaying consideration of the issue. Since then, key House lawmakers have said they plan to take up a new measure that will spend \$150 billion or more to jump-start the economy. At a hearing before the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee October 29, Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) said the House plans to introduce an economic stimulus package that includes infrastructure investment at the opening of the post-election session.

Key groups called on lawmakers to significantly increase the water funds beyond the levels included in the earlier bill. The U.S. Conference of Mayors, for example, called for \$18.75 billion in direct grants to cities to help rehabilitate aging water and sewer infrastructure, comply with EPA sewer overflow requirements and promote source water protection and availability. Committee Chairman James Oberstar (D-MN) vowed to widely distribute the group's material in

the House. State environment officials suggested that Congress should provide an additional \$6.5 billion in EPA clean water loan funds beyond the \$7.5 billion included in the earlier bill. The National Association of Clean Water Agencies is calling on Congress to boost clean water funding levels by \$3.5 billion over the previous amount. NACWA sent an October 15 letter to Democratic leaders seeking a total of \$10 billion for clean water infrastructure and identified specifics for \$3 billion in ready-to-go infrastructure projects. NACWA is asking for “a more significant grant or negative interest loan component that will make funds more attractive to communities that have been hit hard by the economic downturn.” Citing the NACWA-identified projects, WEF sent a [letter](#) to Congress on October 28 urging Congress to include wastewater infrastructure funding in a stimulus package.

Speculation Swirls on Obama Plans for EPA

Washington moved quickly to plan for the new Presidential administration, as speculation swirled about President-elect Obama’s environmental priorities and potential appointments to key posts at EPA and other agencies. Meanwhile, congressional leaders began work on an economic stimulus bill that will likely include significant funding for water infrastructure, and an internal fight broke out over leadership of a key committee with jurisdiction over drinking water and climate change legislation.

The President-elect’s transition team includes several individuals with significant EPA or environmental experience, including: Clinton EPA Administrator Carol Browner; Phil Schiliro, a former Chief of Staff to Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA); and Rep. Rahm Emanuel (D-IL), who has been a leading advocate on Great Lakes funding issues. The transition will include agency-by-agency reviews, and published reports indicate that Robert Sussman, a deputy EPA administrator under Browner, will lead the review of EPA. EPA has designated Louise Wise, a career executive in the Office of Policy, Economics and Innovation, will coordinate the agency’s transition efforts.

With regard to future leadership at EPA, environmental lawyer Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. was surprise addition to the list of those being mentioned for the post of administrator. Kennedy is said to be the preferred choice of national environmental groups. Others on the speculative short list include: Lisa Jackson, Chief of Staff to Governor Jon Corzine (D-NJ) and a former Commissioner of the Pennsylvania DEP; Mary Nichols, chair of the California Air Resources Control Board and a former EPA official; Kathleen McGinty, head of the Pennsylvania DEQ and former chair of the White House Council on Environmental Quality; and Kansas Governor Kathleen Sebelius, an Obama favorite who was also considered for Vice President.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA), announced his intention to challenge Chairman John Dingell (D-MI) for chairmanship of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. Waxman has advocated more aggressive climate legislation and has also been a long-standing advocate for greater environmental regulation. His election as chair of the committee with jurisdiction over drinking water and climate issues could complicate efforts by the Obama administration to approach these issues with a more consensus-based approach.

OMB Clears EPA Pharmaceutical Disposal Proposed Rule to Facilitate Drug Take Back Programs

The White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on November 4 cleared an EPA proposal that would relax waste rules for pharmaceuticals in an effort to boost drug take-back programs and ease disposal requirements for health care facilities -- a move that is aimed at discouraging consumers from dumping drugs into the wastewater stream. The proposal -- one of several steps EPA is adopting to address concerns about the presence of pharmaceuticals in drinking water -- is intended to ease disposal requirements within hospitals, pharmacies and other health care facilities and encourage drug take-back programs in order to prevent disposal in the wastewater stream. According to EPA's Office of Water, improper disposal of drugs can account for about 10 percent of pharmaceutical influent at water treatment operations. The proposal aims to help overcome complications from RCRA regulations, which subjects many chemicals found in pharmaceuticals to hazardous waste rules that set strict waste handling, record-keeping and personnel training requirements and demand drugs be incinerated. The rule proposes to list pharmaceuticals under the Resource Conservation & Reclamation Act (RCRA) as "universal waste," a category that has less stringent disposal regulations than the law's hazardous waste listing. The notice of the OMB review is located at:

<http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eoDetails?rrid=116100>. To view a summary of the proposed rule, visit:

<http://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule;jsessionid=0a65171430d5adb8c60399ab427ab0eec339c8c83e47.e38Nch4NbhuNa40LbxmQaxiNaxmNe6fznA5Pp7ftolbGmkTy?ruleID=287114>.