



NEWS The United States Conference of Mayors

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US Mayors Welcome EPA Release of Much Anticipated Guidance to Support Clean Water Goals in Cities

Washington, DC -- The nation's mayors today, thanked EPA Deputy Administrator Bob Perciaseppe for unveiling the Agency's new Integrated Planning policy to mayors attending the 2011 U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM) Water Summit in Washington, DC. The new policy directly addresses many concerns raised by mayors involving EPA enforcement actions on wet weather overflows involving their wastewater utilities and their Combined Sewer Overflows and Sanitary Sewer Overflows (CSO/SSO).

"The EPA has been a strong partner for cities regarding stormwater management, and this policy, created through collaboration with USCM, will guide cities as we strive to create sustainable, healthy and efficient systems," said Philadelphia Mayor Michael A. Nutter, Vice President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors. "Through this partnership, Federal, state and municipal governments will more effectively manage the immediate and long-term effects of stormwater on our communities throughout the nation."

"The United States Conference of Mayors recognizes the extraordinary effort and the amount of work that EPA has undertaken to develop the Integrated Planning approach that will make it possible for local government to achieve clean water goals and increased environmental and public health results," said Pleasanton (CA) Mayor Jennifer Hosterman, Co-Chair of the Mayors Water Council at the Conference. "The Conference will continue to provide support to cities who will work collaboratively with EPA's Regional Offices permitting officials to implement the Integrated Planning policy guidance."

"Over the last two years EPA and USCM have engaged in a robust dialogue. While we share the goal of clean water, mayors must also safeguard the fiscal health of their cities," said Baltimore Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, Co-Chair of the Mayors Water Council at the Conference. "EPA is demonstrating that they are serious about moving forward in a true partnership with mayors across the country."

Over the past year, EPA officials listened to local government concerns, conducted an internal review of the consent negotiation process, and determined that the process could be improved by simultaneously considering how to best focus local investment to get superior environmental protection results. EPA issued the new policy using a Guidance Memorandum to their Regional Offices entitled – "ACHIEVING WATER QUALITY THROUGH INTEGRATED

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MUNICIPAL STORMWATER AND WASTEWATER PLANS”. The Conference requested that the Agency issue such guidance in a report entitled “Local Government Recommendations to Increase CSO/SSO Flexibility in Achieving Clean Water Goals” that was sent to EPA on October 28, 2010. Now, the EPA has responded with a policy framework that provides the flexibility local government needs to continue progress in the clean water vision for America; but prevents relaxation of water quality standards and goals.

Since 2009 the Conference has been engaged in a dialogue with EPA’s Office of Water, Office of Enforcement and Compliance and the Department of Justice to review the consent agreement negotiation process. Local government has argued that the consent negotiations have resulted in unreasonable costs and do not properly balance environmental benefits. Several cities have recently entered into consent decrees to address wet weather overflows that range in cost between \$1 and \$4.7 billion. These are among the most costly public works projects in the history of these cities.

The Integrated Planning approach attempts to include all of a city’s clean water responsibilities to achieve the goals and objectives of the Clean Water Act, and focus the investment of limited dollars to address its most pressing health and welfare issues first. The Memorandum demonstrates recognition of the need for continued coordination between the municipalities and Agency policy at all levels. It is designed to insure that EPA works with cities to achieve the most effective and cost efficient approaches that are protective of public health and the environment. To view the memorandum issued by EPA, visit: www.epa.gov/npdes/integratedplans.

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