



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

OCT 26 2016

OFFICE OF WATER

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Community Solutions for Stormwater Management: A Guide for Voluntary Long-Term Planning

FROM: Joël Beauvais
Deputy Assistant Administrator

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TO: EPA Regional Administrators

Over the past several years, the EPA has been talking with states and communities, business and industry groups, academia and non-governmental organizations about the best ways to manage urban stormwater. Research and technical assistance results have improved our understanding of successful approaches. In addition, the agency has been exploring opportunities for communities to leverage funding and find ways to reduce costs through proactive long-term stormwater management that can lead to multiple community benefits.

From this input – both stakeholder and research results – several patterns have emerged:

- Communities cannot afford to wait to address the flooding and public health hazards of stormwater: *the curb and gutter (gray infrastructure) approach alone to managing stormwater is not enough to address these risks.*
- In the past several years, many cities have found that an effective, comprehensive, long-term approach to managing stormwater includes green infrastructure practices that *manage rain where it falls.*
- Comprehensive, long-term planning for stormwater management – integrating stormwater with economic development, transportation, recreation and other planning – supports *smart investments and new funding sources.*
- Communities are finding the benefits from such long-term approaches go well beyond helping to meet regulatory requirements and *turn hazards into opportunities* for their communities.

In an effort to foster robust long-term stormwater management by communities, the Office of Water is announcing a three-pronged approach that includes a planning guide, a stormwater toolkit and technical assistance. With this memo, I am transmitting the draft planning guide entitled, *Community Solutions for Stormwater Management: A Guide for Voluntary Long-Term Planning*. This guide describes how communities can develop a comprehensive long-term community stormwater plan that integrates stormwater management with their broader plans for economic development, infrastructure investment and environmental compliance.

This guide outlines the elements the EPA will look for in a long-term stormwater plan. It focuses on using multi-benefit approaches to solve stormwater pollution control challenges. It recognizes that for a plan to be more affordable, communities need to make financial investments over a time horizon of sufficient length to allow for cost efficiencies through working with other municipal programs.

Along with our continued commitment to support communities' sound financial water infrastructure investments, the coordinated technical assistance will help five communities develop plans that will serve as national models. The communities will develop their plans using this new guide and provide feedback that will be used to refine the draft guide. They will also help the EPA develop and test a new web-based EPA Stormwater Toolkit to be publicly released at a later date. This stormwater toolkit will include technical and financing resources to walk communities through the long-term stormwater planning process provided in the guide. Our intention behind this approach is to make these resources as user friendly and easy to understand as possible.

We anticipate the lessons learned from these efforts will help lower barriers, make progress towards healthier communities and make urban stormwater management more affordable. We also recognize that many communities are, or may be considering, integrated planning to prioritize investments for meeting their Clean Water Act obligations. The stormwater planning approach outlined can be used in conjunction with those integrated planning efforts.

I encourage Regional Administrators to work with the states and communities to identify opportunities for implementing the long-term planning approach outlined in the draft guide and to garner their feedback. The EPA's Water Infrastructure and Resiliency Finance Center (WIRFC) is also available to help communities identify sustainable funding solutions. I also want to recognize your significant contributions to addressing stormwater challenges and helping to make our communities more resilient and our nation's waters clean for generations to come.

Please contact Andrew Sawyers, Director of the Office of Wastewater Management, (202) 564-5668, (sawyers.andrew@epa.gov), or Deborah Nagle, Director, Water Permits Division, (202) 564-1185, (nagle.deborah@epa.gov) if you have any questions.

Attachment

Cc: Water Division Directors
NPDES Branch Chiefs
NPS Regional Managers