Why Every American Should Care About the Future of Rural Water

Challenges and Opportunities

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Rural Water Challenges

- Water utility - largest rural community investment
- Water utilities support public health, economic & community development
- Small utilities facing ever increasing compliance requirements
- Capital improvements & economies of scale
- Aging workforce
- Developing local capacity
- Increasing demands on watersheds
- Regionalization, consolidation & collaboration
Gaps in Rural Infrastructure Development

- Over $300 Billion in “Current” Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Need; Over $1 Trillion over next 30 years

- Small Community Requirements
  - Water: $59 Billion for 24 million population; 9% of population but 19% of need
  - Wastewater: $22.7 Billion with 817 new treatment facilities needed

- New AWWA study places needs for water infrastructure at over $1 trillion over next 25 years
FIGURE 4 Overall Capital Investment Gap for U.S. Water Infrastructure, 1956–2040 (billions of 2010 dollars)

U.S. Conference of Mayors Study

- W & WW infrastructure has greater returns than other types of public infrastructure
- One dollar invested leads to GDP increase of $6.35 in the long term
- For each dollar spent operating and maintaining water/wastewater infrastructure, economic output for all industries increases an average of $2.62
Investment Opportunities

- Each job added in the sector creates 3.68 jobs in the national economy to support that job.
- Every $1 Billion spent on upgrading or maintaining sector infrastructure creates an estimated 42,000 – 57,000 jobs.
- Every construction dollar generates nearly $15 of private investment and adds $14 to the local property tax base.
Why Rural Water is Important

- Improved community health
- Foundation for all economic activity
- Watershed protection & sustainability
- Save and/or create employment
- Spur private sector investment
- Enlarge property tax base
- Attract other government funding
- Improved economic development climate
- Avoid increased future costs
Future Opportunities

- Watershed focus
- Water supports agriculture, resource extraction/use, tourism and emerging economic sectors
- Capital investments = Jobs
- Sustainable, effective utilities
- Private investments in infrastructure
- Cost-effective & comprehensive services
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