



## Water Infrastructure Matters to New Jersey

We all consume water and create waste, but seldom think about the underlying pipes, sewers, and utilities that sustain our water usage. Yet our lives depend upon clean drinking water, and robust wastewater and stormwater infrastructure systems support local economies, create strong communities, and protect our environment.

**But our current systems are inadequate:** The American Society of Civil Engineers' 2016 Report Card gave New Jersey a "C" grade for drinking water infrastructure and a "D" grade for wastewater infrastructure.

### What does that mean to New Jersey's communities?

- **Water main and sewer breaks** disrupt businesses and daily life and can cause street flooding that shuts down roads and transit and creates health hazards.
- **Leaking drinking water pipes** in New Jersey are estimated to lose 30 percent or more of treated drinking water before it ever reaches homes or businesses.
- Unhealthy **drinking water containing lead** threatens children's brain development in many communities with older buildings.
- Inadequate wastewater and stormwater systems contribute to **localized flooding**, water pollution and, in 21 of our oldest and largest communities, overflows and backups of sewage into rivers, streets and basements.

### Smart water investments expand economic opportunities

Water is life. And we can't afford to wait on making essential improvements. The US EPA estimates a price tag of **\$25 billion over 20 years** for upgrading our drinking water, wastewater and stormwater infrastructure to a state of good repair. Delaying the upgrades will only cause more disruption and cost more in the end.

- For every dollar spent on water infrastructure, another **\$2.62** in economic activity is generated in all industries in the same year. (U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis)
- An estimated 15 jobs are created throughout the economy, for every \$1 million invested in water infrastructure. (Value of Water Campaign)
- Infrastructure investments can create access to opportunity for residents through workforce training, access to **high-quality jobs** with career pathways, and contracting opportunities. When well planned, they can catalyze other neighborhood improvements.

### Fixing pipes protects water sources, saves money and improves health

Modern, reliable water infrastructure lays the foundation for businesses to operate and keeps cities and towns attractive for private investment. Healthy drinking water ensures everyone – including children – has access to a promising future.

- An estimated **130 million gallons of drinking water are being** lost each day across New Jersey. As much as 50 million gallons of that could be saved through repairs that pay for themselves -- enough to service a city over twice the size of the City of Newark every day.
- Well-managed water systems lower their long-term costs, by leveraging new technologies and by avoiding **emergency repairs that typically cost three to five times more** than planned upgrades.
- Pipe and plumbing upgrades can **eliminate lead in drinking water** in older buildings. Among 323 New Jersey public schools tested last year for lead in drinking water, 137 schools showed lead levels that exceeded federal standards.

*The Jersey Water Works collaborative is transforming New Jersey's inadequate water infrastructure through sustainable, cost-effective solutions that provide communities with clean water and waterways; healthier, safer neighborhoods; local jobs; flood and climate resilience; and economic growth.*

### **Green approaches tackle flooding and improve neighborhoods**

Communities are confronting increased frequency and intensity of flooding due to an increase in paved surfaces, more extreme weather and inadequate stormwater infrastructure.

- By capturing rainwater so it can be reused or seep into the ground where it falls, **green infrastructure techniques** like raingardens, pervious pavement and planted swales also enhance the health and beauty of our communities and boost property values.
- A combination of green and gray infrastructure solutions will deliver the most cost-effective solutions in the 21 New Jersey cities where new state permits are compelling billions of dollars of investment to **end raw sewage overflows**.

### **Water and sewer utilities can be community anchors and environmental champions**

- At the local level, **engaging stakeholders is the only way** to build support for water infrastructure investment, including allowing for meaningful input into projects and making sure that utility board membership represents the community.
- Some water utilities offer tours of their facilities and send staff to schools to **educate children** on the ways they sustain clean water. Others offer grants to community organizations.
- Innovative water and sewer **utilities of the future** serve their communities through projects that have multiple benefits – for the environment, for people and for the economy. For example, some employ new technologies to extract energy from waste and/or employ wind and solar energy.

### **Common-sense innovations lower costs and strengthen communities**

Working together, we can modernize New Jersey's inadequate drinking water, wastewater and stormwater systems in cost-effective ways that strengthen communities and support sustainable growth. Jersey Water Works members work across sectors to advance its four main goals:

1. Effective green and gray infrastructure that delivers quality service and reduces flooding
2. Smart plans that end combined sewer overflows and protect waterways and health
3. Financially sustainable and affordable systems that operate efficiently
4. Empowered stakeholders who participate actively and shape local water systems

You can view Jersey Water Works's projects, accomplishments and member commitments on its website at [www.jerseywaterworks.org](http://www.jerseywaterworks.org). As a diverse collaborative, Jersey Water Works does not take positions on state or federal legislation, but does coordinate and share its members' recommendations.

**Smart infrastructure. Strong communities.**

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