

CIVIL ENGINEERS SUPPORT INTRODUCTION OF CLEAN WATER TRUST ACT

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RESTON, Va.—The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) today backed the introduction of the Clean Water Trust Act of 2005, a bill that will create a federal program to provide a long-term, dependable funding source for our nation's critical water supply. Congressman John J. Duncan (2nd District – Tenn.), chair of the House Water Resources and Environment Subcommittee, introduced this important legislation to address the projected shortfall in water infrastructure investment.

"The development of clean and safe drinking water systems is one of the greatest advancements in public health," said ASCE President Dennis Martenson, P.E., DEE, F.ASCE. "I commend Representative Duncan for introducing this crucial legislation, and for taking the crucial first step in protecting and enhancing the health, safety and welfare of the nation's citizens."

"Unless we act to improve our deteriorating wastewater infrastructure, we stand to lose the significant gains in water quality that have been achieved over the last 30 years, and the economic benefits of the investment the nation has made to date. This bill embraces innovative solutions for increasing investment in our wastewater treatment infrastructure to ensure that we will continue to keep our waters clean," said Duncan.

In March 2005, ASCE published the *2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure* giving the condition of our nation's drinking water and wastewater systems a grade of D-. The nation's drinking water system faces a staggering public investment need to replace aging facilities, comply with safe drinking water regulations and meet future needs. Federal funding in 2005 remains at \$850 million, less than 10 percent of the total national need. Aging wastewater systems discharge billions of gallons of untreated sewage into U.S. surface waters each year. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that the nation must invest \$390 billion over the next 20 years to replace existing wastewater systems and build new ones to meet increasing demand.

If enacted, the legislation will:

- Create a dedicated, deficit-neutral Clean Water Trust Fund, similar to the federal transportation funding program;
- Restore the federal-state-local funding partnership needed to provide essential resources for upholding the Clean Water Act of 1972;
- Address the funding short-fall, estimated at nearly \$500 billion by the EPA; and
- Continue to guarantee the progress of high quality water established by the Clean Water Act.

In a recent public opinion poll by Frank Luntz, 86 percent of Americans support the introduction of a bill in the U.S. Congress that would create a long-term, sustainable and reliable Trust Fund for clean water infrastructure. The Clean Water Trust Fund is supported by numerous organizations, including the National Association of Towns and Townships, the American Council of Engineering Companies, the Rural Community Assistance Partnership and the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

Founded in 1852, American Society of Civil Engineers represents more than 139,000 civil engineers worldwide and is America's oldest national engineering society. In March 2005, ASCE released its 2005 Report Card for America's Infrastructure, with updated grades in 15 categories. For more information, visit www.asce.org.

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