

The Means to Manage



As readers of *Storm Water Solutions*, you and your peers consistently communicate funding and budgets to be top-tier industry concerns. Nationally, we face an enormous gap—tens of billions of dollars and growing—between the money needed for and that actually being invested in storm water infrastructure.

Much of this backlog stems not from ignorance or apathy, but from the sheer availability of funds. Some utility groups face more hurdles than others based on their geography, facility conditions, level of taxpayer support and the like, but in today's ultra-competitive public funding environment, securing a slice of the

storm water dollars pie is no picnic for anyone.

I must, however, echo the sentiments of the author of this issue's funding article (page 9): This storm water funding gap will not bridge itself. If it is not addressed now, then when? And if it is not industry professionals addressing it, then who?

It is not your imagination—traditional loan and grant opportunities are dwindling. But rather than sitting back and accepting this fact, which will only exacerbate financial and infrastructure challenges, explore alternative options for funding new construction, upgrades, inspections and maintenance.

The aforementioned funding article outlines several ideas, including revenue bonds, sales tax allocations and fees. I have said it before and will state it here again: I am an advocate for well introduced, executed and applied storm water utility fees. They are becoming more commonplace and in many places better accepted for good reason. No matter which route your group takes to collect the means for managing storm water needs, reach out to your peers for advice, success stories, resources and partnership opportunities that can help jumpstart plans and keep them on track.

Generating and sustaining storm water funding today is all about being proactive and thinking outside the box. This type of attitude and approach is the only way to begin improving storm water infrastructure while closing the industry's funding gap—not to mention to pass along adequate infrastructure and a more manageable to-do list for future generations.

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