

## Why Connecticut Needs a National Clean Water Trust Fund



The United States's wastewater infrastructure, aging and increasingly unable to handle the pressures of modern society, is in serious danger. When pipes break and sewers overflow, communities, the environment, and our economy all suffer.

Recognizing that states across the country were faced with clean water spending requirements well beyond their ability to support, the federal government created the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The fund, established in the late 1980s, provides states with federal grant money that they then use to make low-interest loans to communities for clean water projects.

Unfortunately, funding for the program has atrophied since it became fully operational in 1991. Since that year, funding has been cut by half (nearly two-thirds when adjusted for inflation), leaving states scrambling to deal with growing backlogs of maintenance and improvement projects. Broken pipes and sewer overflows spill more than one trillion gallons of untreated sewage every year and contaminate our beaches, waterways, and estuaries.

Given the fickle year-to-year funding of the SRF and the urgency of our clean water troubles, we need a new solution. A federal clean water trust fund would provide a steady, reliable, and equitable source of funding for needed projects across the country. By sidestepping the contentious appropriations process, a trust fund would safeguard our clean water infrastructure, our environment, and our economy.

**Funding Gap:** Connecticut's water needs outpace its current ability to fund projects by a large margin. The state's most recent Intended Use Plan lists 131 projects at a total cost of \$2.17 billion. In 2007, the state received 1/165th of that – \$13.1 million – from the federal government.

Federal contributions to Connecticut's clean water funding efforts have decreased by 47.8 percent since the Clean Water SRF was fully implemented in fiscal 1991 and 65.9 percent when adjusted for inflation.

*"At this funding level, it is estimated that...only one in seven projects ready to proceed will be funded in FY07. This limitation on available funding has a significant negative impact on the state's ability to continue with nitrogen removal projects for improvement to Long Island Sound, as well as projects which address reduction or elimination of combined sewer overflows (CSOs) to surface waters."*

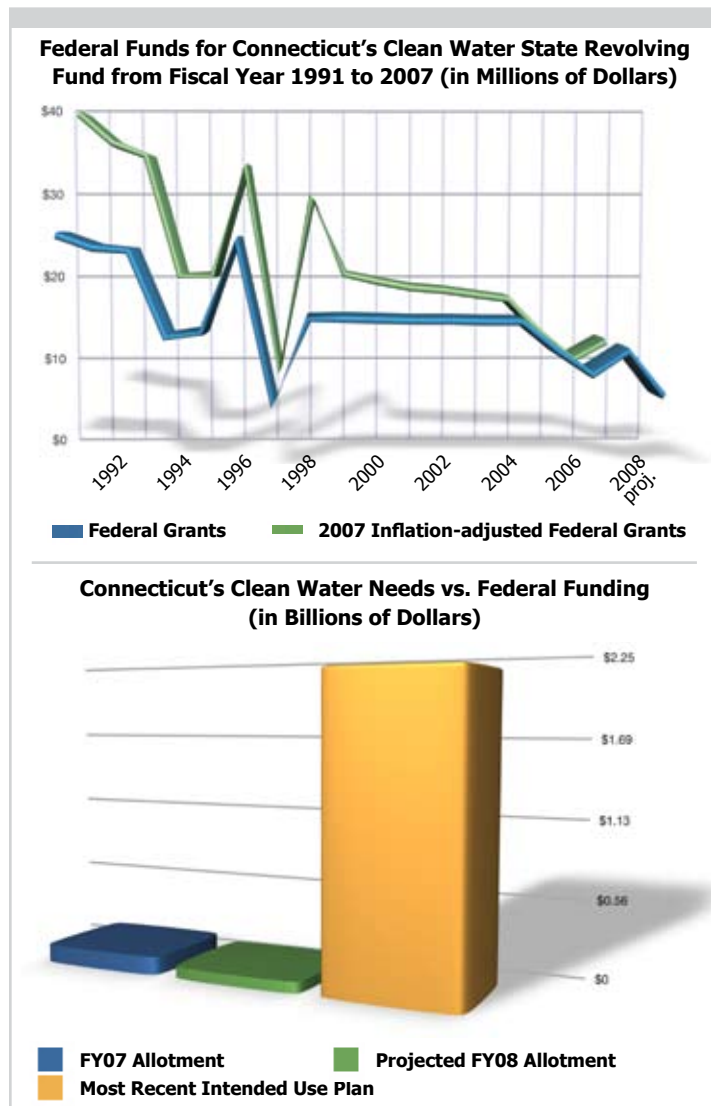
**Water Quality:** According to a 2004 state assessment, 42 percent of river miles and 8 percent of lakes suffer from impaired water quality. Additionally, 40 percent of estuaries and bays are impaired for aquatic life, and 49 percent do not support shellfish consumption.

**Beach Closings:** A report by the Natural Resources Defense Council shows nationwide beach closings and swimming advisories were at an all-time high in 2006. Connecticut experienced 224 closure or advisory events lasting six weeks or fewer in 2006, up 12 percent from 2005.

**Job Creation:** One billion dollars in federal infrastructure investment leads to approximately 47,500 new jobs. Addressing Connecticut's currently listed wastewater infrastructure needs would spur 103,075 employment opportunities.

*"Maintaining progress on water quality projects in the face of increasing needs, rising fuel and materials costs, and inflation will require either a stable funding source or a fundamental change in the method of funding water quality projects."* – Connecticut 2006/2007 Clean Water State Revolving Fund Intended Use Plan.

For more information, download the full report, Clear Waters: Why America Needs a Clean Water Trust Fund, and analyses of all 50 states at: [www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/clearwaters](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org/water/clearwaters)



**Food & Water Watch**

1400 16th St. NW, Suite 225 • Washington, DC 20036  
 tel: (202) 797-6550 • fax: (202) 797-6560  
[foodandwater@fwwatch.org](mailto:foodandwater@fwwatch.org)  
[www.foodandwaterwatch.org](http://www.foodandwaterwatch.org)