

## Why Georgia 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:** Georgia's water needs outpace its current ability to fund projects by a large margin. The state's most recent Intended Use Plan lists nearly \$1.6 billion in wastewater infrastructure needs, more than 88 times the state's 2007 federal allotment of \$18.1 million.

Federal contributions to Georgia'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.

*"Yes, there is a growing backlog of need. There are some really big challenges - many rivers and streams get a lot of use, and effluent limits are very stringent, and Georgia is growing rapidly. Wastewater infrastructure development can be quite expensive. Currently, a statewide water management plan is being developed."* – Frances Carpenter, Engineer with the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Environmental Department Division

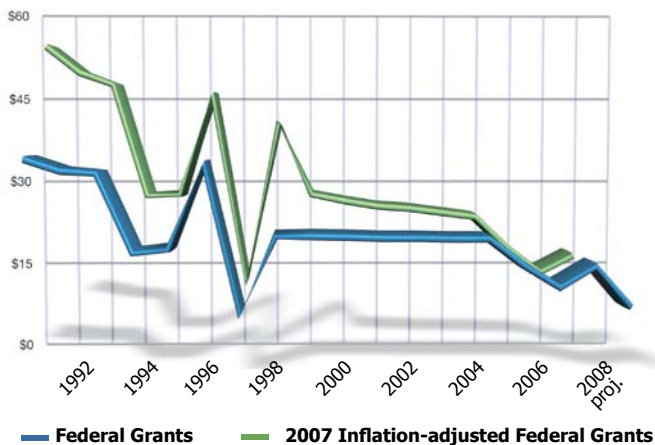
**Water Quality:** According to a 2004 state assessment, 58 percent of river miles and 25 percent of lakes suffer from impaired water quality, as do 11 percent of assessed estuaries.

**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. Georgia experienced 203 closings and advisories lasting six weeks or fewer in 2006.

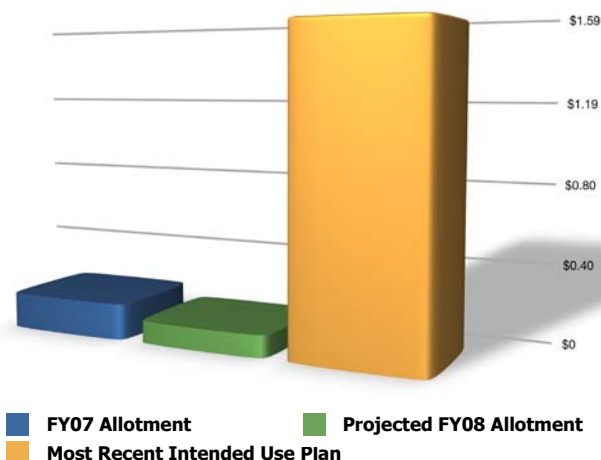
**Job Creation:** One billion dollars in federal infrastructure investment leads to approximately 47,500 new jobs. Addressing Georgia's currently listed wastewater infrastructure needs would spur 76,000 employment opportunities.

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)

Federal Funds for Georgia's Clean Water State Revolving Fund from Fiscal Year 1991 to 2007 (in Millions of Dollars)



Georgia's Clean Water Needs vs. Federal Funding (in Billions of Dollars)



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