BACKGROUND
Water infrastructure is critically important for all people but usually goes unnoticed. The wide variety of structures, services and features that form Wisconsin’s water resources benefit residential, commercial and industrial places on a daily basis. This infrastructure needs urgent fixing. It was built more than a generation ago and has not had substantial investments since then. New environmental standards and increased population growth demand more from these aging systems. Replacing systems now is easier than after a major failure. In this “Year of Clean Water,” there must be efforts to preserve Wisconsin’s water resources for future generations.

KEY FACTS
- Current technology is substantially better at removing pollutants from the water and costs less to run because of energy efficiency gains; old plants do not have these benefits.
- Municipalities want to replace their aging infrastructure and have cost-sharing programs that they use at the state level but these programs need more funding.
- Increasing the commitment to water resources pays dividends immediately with cleaner water for drinking, tourism and flood mitigation.
- Many water programs require little funding to have a major impact. A small increase tied with legislative language rewrites make a huge difference.

SOLUTIONS
- Broaden the types of projects funded under the Municipal Flood Control Grant to allow for preventative measures that don’t remove taxable property from municipalities.
- Update the Urban Nonpoint Source Grant language to allow for planning and construction grants each year (instead of every other) and increase annual funding to $5 million.
- Increase the amount of grant money provided in the Environmental Improvement Fund to allow more municipalities to benefit from the program.

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ACEC WI members develop innovative solutions that increase our state’s economic growth and improve communities. Need insight on tough infrastructure issues? Contact Chris Klein at 608.257.9223 or chris@acecwi.org.

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