
Program Changes

Project Priority List

The last time the priority ranking system was revised with significant changes was in 2007. With changes to the Revised Total Coliform Rule, Disinfection By-Product Rule, and coming changes to the Water Supply Rule that address concerns about failing infrastructure and emerging contaminants, the Facilities Engineering and Drinking Water and Groundwater and Protection Divisions came together to update the ranking system. Through the course of internal meetings, feedback from external stakeholders, and a public hearing, which was held on Thursday December 1, 2016 at 1:30PM in the Calvin Coolidge Room at National Life in Montpelier, the following changes were made.

Under the current ranking system, points are primarily awarded for system facility deficiencies, with the most serious public health risk deficiency receiving the highest points. Secondly, there are additive criteria for sensitive populations (eligible schools and childcare facilities have a weighing factor of 1.2 applied to the deficiency points), physical consolidation, financial need/affordability, population, downtown and village center preference, security improvements, and asset management.

Proposed changes to the deficiency ranking system include: streamlining the deficiency point categories, preserving award of the highest points to the most serious public health risks, elevating projects that will address lead and copper issues, and refining how aged infrastructure is addressed. For the aged infrastructure issue, three new categories were created to better reflect what the funding and regulatory programs are witnessing: inadequacy of critical components, system vulnerable to contamination, and improvements to/redundancy of system components. Additionally, the language used to describe each deficiency was updated for clarity and consistency.

Proposed changes to the additive points include: eliminating the 1.2 weighting factor in favor of a straight point category for sensitive populations (eligible schools and person-care facilities), eliminating the population category in favor of a service connection category, eliminating security points, updating the consolidation category, and updating the State Downtown Designation Programs category. There are also four new point categories being proposed: project(s) proactively addressing contamination below the MCL; installation of distribution or individual meters; project to protect assets from flooding; and systems under an enforcement action.

A comprehensive summary of the changes is included in Appendix C and can be found [here](#).

Guidance Documents

Changes to all Guidance Documents (GDs) are proposed. GDs are being updated to reflect current practices, often including the Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund (CWSRF) in the procedures where there are similar provisions. The two substantial changes proposed are for [Guidance Document #22](#) and a new [Guidance Document, #26](#). GD#22 outlines forgiveness for planning loans; GD#26 will summarize the proposed DEC-approved Asset Management Plan Criteria and associated loan forgiveness. Those GDs whose processes aren't changing will be updated to reflect current names, emails and websites. GDs are summarized in Appendix B which can be found [here](#).

All changes proposed in the FY2016 IUP were implemented, which can be accessed [here](#).

Fundable Range

The DWSRF historically has established a 'fundable range' for projects; those that are above the line are fundable and those below must wait until funding becomes available via bypass. The DWSRF is proposing to expand the fundable range line by approximately 30% of available funds. This 30% is a little under \$6 million dollars and results in an additional two projects considered fundable. We feel comfortable extending the range for a variety of reasons. 1) The DWSRF has been able to fund most if not all the ready-to-proceed projects on past priority lists utilizing bypass criteria. The DWSRF expects to have a similar situation this year. 2) With increased pressure to use the funds in a timely manner, we feel that extending the funding line will encourage applicants to move more aggressively toward meeting the readiness-to-proceed criteria. 3) If necessary, we have reserved the authority to move up to 33% of open CWSRF capitalization grant dollars to the DWSRF.