



Report: Funding for water and wastewater infrastructure woefully short

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Current capital investment in U.S. water and wastewater systems is insufficient to meet the demands of the systems — aging infrastructure — and the funding gap is only poised to grow over the coming decades, leaving residents vulnerable to spotty service, water-borne illnesses and job loss. Those are the conclusions of [Failure to Act: The Economic Impact of Current Investment Trends in Water and Wastewater Treatment Infrastructure](#), a new report by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE).

In 2010, according to the report, \$91 billion was needed to maintain and upgrade U.S. drinking-water and wastewater systems. However, only \$36 billion of the required amount was funded, creating a funding gap of \$55 billion. If current trends hold, the capital funding gap will grow to \$126 billion by 2020 and \$144 billion by 2040, the report says.

As a result, pipes will leak, the construction of new facilities required to meet stringent environmental standards will be delayed, addressing the gap will become increasingly more expensive, and waters will be polluted, ASCE writes.

The insufficient funding could result in \$206 billion in increased expenses for residents and businesses between now and 2020, the report concludes. Relocating to areas with reliable water supplies, treating water-borne illnesses and installing self-supply systems are activities

that will contribute to the increased costs, ASCE says.

Furthermore, "unless the infrastructure deficit is addressed by 2040, 1.4 million jobs will be at risk in addition to what is otherwise anticipated for that year" because of the financial burden placed on businesses by ineffective water and wastewater infrastructure, the report adds.

"The purpose of this study is limited to presenting the economic consequences of the continuing underinvestment in America's water, wastewater and wet weather management systems", the report concludes. "This work is not intended to propose or imply prescriptive policy changes. However, many organizations and interest groups, including ASCE, continue to engage with policy makers at all levels of government to seek solutions to the nation's infrastructure problems."

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