



## Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

235 Promenade Street | Providence, RI 02908 | 401.222.4700 | [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov) | @RhodeIslandDEM

### CONTACT:

Evan LaCross, 401-799-0100

[Dem.communications@dem.ri.gov](mailto:Dem.communications@dem.ri.gov)

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Monday, March 4, 2024

## DEM, RI INFRASTRUCTURE BANK SOLICIT COMMUNITIES TO APPLY FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR WATER IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

PROVIDENCE, RI – The Department of Environmental Management (DEM) and the [Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank](#) (RIIB) are encouraging Rhode Island communities that have identified needed water quality improvement projects to submit them for inclusion on DEM’s fiscal year 2025 project priority list (PPL). DEM’s [Office of Water Resources](#) (OWR) is reminding the public that such projects must be submitted by Friday, April 5, 2024 at 4 PM to be considered for favorable [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) (CWSRF) financing within the next 18 months. DEM maintains this list and RIIB, which administers the program, uses it to make its financing decisions.



*The Town of Narragansett obtained a matching, \$650,000 resilience grant in 2020 to fortify the Scarborough wastewater treatment plant against more intense coastal storms.*

Enacted in November of 2021, the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (AKA, the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law) delivered historic funding levels to repair and update the nation’s water infrastructure. Last week, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) [announced nearly \\$47.5 million for Rhode Island drinking water and clean water infrastructure upgrades](#), part of a [\\$5.8 billion investment](#) through the CWSRF.

“Clean water infrastructure helps maintain the health of our local waters that are central to our environment, way of life, and economy here in the Ocean State,” said Governor Dan McKee. “Our state’s future will be shaped by the infrastructure choices we make today, and Rhode Island is grateful for the

Telephone 401.222.4700 | [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov) | Rhode Island Relay 711

funding from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law that will be invested in a range of projects that will help keep our waters clean.”

“We tend to take clean water for granted, but we can't afford to take our water infrastructure for granted. We must strategically invest in upkeep and new projects to ensure Rhode Islanders have access to clean, safe, reliable drinking water and modern, effective wastewater collection and treatment facilities. This is a smart investment in public health and the health of our economy. Whether it's from a tap, shower, or toilet, our water system is essential and we must ensure it works properly and reliably for all Rhode Islanders, both now and in the future," said Senator Reed, a senior member of the Appropriations Committee.

"Safe drinking and wastewater systems are essential to good health and the wellbeing of our environment," said Senator Whitehouse. "Rhode Island is able to make these kinds of generational investments in water infrastructure because of our Bipartisan Infrastructure Law."

"Everyone deserves access to clean water," said Congressman Seth Magaziner. "This federal funding will modernize our state's water infrastructure, protecting the health of children and families while reducing pollution entering our rivers, ending up on our beaches, and flowing into Narragansett Bay."

"Every Rhode Islander deserves access to safe, clean water," said Congressman Gabe Amo. "I'm grateful for the Biden Administration's work to implement the historic bipartisan infrastructure law that invests these vital federal resources in our drinking and wastewater systems. Repairing and investing in our state's water systems will protect our public health and support our economy. Our neighbors should applaud this tremendous news for the Ocean State."

“We are in a period of historic levels of investment towards improving clean water infrastructure,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “Rhode Island’s [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) program provides financing for priority water quality projects that help protect our waterways, the health of our families, and supports our economy. The clean water infrastructure that will be enabled by this critical funding will help build Rhode Island’s resilience for projected increases in storm intensities, rainfall amounts, and rising seas from climate change.”

“Due to the impacts of climate change, Rhode Island is seeing more frequent and more severe rain and flooding events,” said Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank Executive Director William Fazioli. “That's why Clean Water State Revolving Fund investments in stormwater management and processing systems are so critical to our communities and to our economy. We're encouraging all of our municipal partners to think big and to be creative in their [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) applications. ”

“The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides the basis for SRF programs through September 30, 2026, but this time will go by quickly,” said DEM Supervising Environmental Planner Jenny Paquet. “For this reason, we are encouraging municipalities to think broadly about their needs, plan for multiyear investments, and submit their projects to the priority list. Projects must be on the project priority list to be considered for principal forgiveness and generous financing terms.”

The [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) program funds a wide array of water pollution abatement and water quality improvement sustainability projects. Eligible types of projects include:

- Wastewater infrastructure, including projects related to sewers, pump stations, and treatment facilities for publicly owned treatment works (POTW)
- Combined sewer overflow abatement
- Community on-site wastewater treatment system repair programs
- Stormwater mitigation projects, particularly green stormwater infrastructure
- Capital equipment needed to maintain green stormwater infrastructure
- Riverbank and estuarine restoration projects including wetland, floodplain, riparian buffer, and salt marsh restoration
- Landfill closures
- Alternative energy and energy efficiency projects that benefit a water pollution treatment facility
- Projects that make wastewater infrastructure more resilient to the effects of climate change
- Water efficiency improvements (methods that reduce water consumption at publicly owned treatment works)
- Planning and design for stormwater or wastewater capital projects (must be a reasonable expectation that the project will result in a viable capital project)

DEM encourages applicants to include potential projects on the PPL even if they don't intend to apply for [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) in FY25. In addition to wastewater infrastructure projects, DEM is interested in increasing participation by entities planning projects related to stormwater pollution abatement, green infrastructure, non-point source pollution abatement, and climate resiliency, as well as projects that benefit disadvantaged communities.

To be included in the project priority list, project descriptions must be submitted on forms provided by DEM. Each project must be described separately on an individual 2025 PPL Request Form. Applicants should feel free to submit any supporting information to further describe their project(s). All projects will be rated and ranked according to criteria contained in the Rules and Regulations for the Priority Determination System for Federal and State Assistance for Construction of Water Pollution Abatement Projects ([250-RICR-150-20-2](#)).

Please note that the submission of a project for rating, ranking, and listing on the PPL does not obligate the applicant to go forward with the project but does ensure eligibility to seek financial assistance via CWSRF for that project at the appropriate time. DEM will rate and rank all submitted projects and formulate the PPL. After all submissions have been rated, a 30-day public notice regarding the PPL will be posted on [DEM's website](#) with the opportunity for public comment. Revisions may be made based upon comments received. The final PPL will also be posted on DEM's [website](#).

If you have any questions, please email [Jenny Paquet](#), 401-537-4260. For more information on DEM programs and services, visit [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov). Follow DEM on Twitter (@RhodelslandDEM), [Facebook](#), or Instagram (@RhodelslandDEM).

###