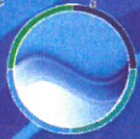


Association of
REGIONAL WATER
Organizations

“Partnerships & Best Practices”

Pilot Project Proposal
for
USEPA & USDA

A Unique State of the Art Concept



Association of Regional Water Organizations’

Proposal for an EPA/USDA Pilot Project

Provided by the Committee of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs

Briefing Dated August 1, 2018

Executive Summary: Over the last two years the Association of Regional Water Organization (ARWO) has represented the interests of regional systems before Congress, The White House, USDA Rural Development, USEPA, BOR, HUD and other federal agencies. The goal of expanding or enacting supportive federal policies and infrastructure funding programs---policies and programs that can strengthen members’ efforts to deliver services to underserved and unserved communities at the lowest possible cost to the taxpayers.

The Proposal: This proposal brings the very best “partnering ideas” currently under consideration or in effect, in part, spreading out over rural, suburban, and urban areas. ARWO is a very unique organization that has hands on experiences that can promote an organic, grassroots effort to show by example through a three-year pilot program in six different states in six distinctly different regions across America. These “partnering ideas” in a conceptual pilot program will begin by hitting the ground running under a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the two governmental agency sponsors; The US Environmental Protection Agency and the USDA Rural Development. ARWO will be the nongovernmental entity that will be responsible for pilot program development, execution, and benchmark reporting.



Regional Water Solutions are Critical for America

The Association of Regional Water Organizations (ARWO) is a non-profit association of regional water and wastewater systems from across the U.S. working to provide sustainable and affordable water and wastewater services for underserved and unserved rural areas and communities. The Association's members have the willingness, capacity and sustainable management expertise to expand into areas adjacent to their current boundaries, and have received numerous requests from unserved areas for assistance.

Often, regional water and wastewater systems are the only way folks living in rural areas can receive safe, potable water and wastewater services at an economy of scale that makes such services affordable to rural residents. Such services are critically important to the vitality of rural America and are essential to rural economic development. Regional systems provide reliable, safe and sustainable systems that promote economic opportunities.

Over the last fifty years, USDA has been a great partner, funding programs to enable rural communities and rural based water and wastewater systems to provide essential services to unserved and underserved rural areas of our country. We have found, however, that many unserved and underserved rural areas continue to lack the financial, technical and managerial capacity to operate, maintain and provide safe and affordable water and wastewater services.

ARWO strongly recommends that the regional model for providing sustainable water and wastewater services be funded as a demonstration program that focuses on utilities with the demonstrated capacity to partner with rural communities to ensure the affordability and viability of these essential services while simultaneously fueling economic development, job growth and increased public health protection.

The proposed demonstration program is intended to help Rural Development carry out its mission and to utilize each and every available dollar to serve the country's unserved and underserved populations.

For your review and consideration, the Association has attached draft appropriation language that would establish and fund the demonstration program.

If you have any questions or need further information, please contact President Bill Teichmiller (217-254-5762, teich4@ejwatercoop.com) or Sr. Vice President Randy Van Dyke (712-363-0636, randy.vandyke@ilrw.org).



The Benefits: The Pilot Project will uniquely stretch across multiple political jurisdictions within each pilot state that will comprehensively encourage and promote partnership initiatives under regional ideal such as, but not necessarily limited to;

- a.) Mentoring partnering, mergers, and consolidations
- b.) Removal of Disincentives for Regionalization through Combining Multiple Funding Demonstration Projects
- c.) Incentives for Project Prioritization on Affordability and Funding Eligibility for Hub Communities or Regional Water & Wastewater Entities to include areas typically underserved or unserved
- d.) Improve Sustainability of Water & Wastewater Systems
- e.) Create Systems with Financial Resiliency including all Lifecycle Costs & Rate Studies
- f.) Peer-to-Peer Networking for Effective Utility Management
- g.) Enhance Emergency Preparedness Planning and Mutual Aid Covenants
- h.) Removal of Impediments for Voluntary Partnerships regarding Legal, Structural, and Regulatory Issues
- i.) Strategic Action Planning to Eliminate Regulatory Noncompliance
- j.) Preference for Economics of Scale should be considered when Restructuring, Partnering, or Sharing Resources by all federal, state, and local governmental units in the best interest of consumers, local customers, and public health policies, and most importantly, the taxpayers of the United States of America
- k.) Source Water Protection and Well Head Protection under Farm Bill Programs
- l.) Environmental Enhancement encouraging Nutrient Reduction Strategies and including small community and rural wastewater initiatives
- m.) Prescreening for Best Practices for asset restoration, including all public, private, and governmental funding avenues
- n.) Statewide Framework Water Planning for Current and Future Infrastructure and Economic Development Planning



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REGIONAL SYSTEMS ARE UNIQUE AND SO IS ARWO

Regional water and wastewater systems are unique organizations with unique needs, such as maintaining infrastructure networks that stretch across multiple political jurisdictions and serving customers who are often spread out over rural, suburban and urban areas. In addition, many regional water systems provide service to communities that have been historically unserved and underserved.

To support these unique water and wastewater systems, a group of regional utility executives came together in 2016 to establish ARWO, a not-for-profit trade association.

Led by an executive committee of utility managers, ARWO's vision is to be the voice of regional water and wastewater systems and their means for knowledge exchange.

ARWO's mission is to promote the present and future effectiveness of regional water and wastewater systems in delivering resilient and affordable services – by advancing our policy priorities in Washington D.C. and providing expert resources to improve governance, management and operations.

ARWO MEMBER SERVICES

[Home](#) > [Services](#)

FEDERAL ADVOCACY

ARWO represents the interests of regional systems before Congress, USDA Rural Development, Bureau of Reclamation, Environmental Protection Agency and other federal agencies.

ARWO supports policies and infrastructure funding programs that will help regional water and wastewater systems to thrive and to provide services to unserved and underserved communities.



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MANAGEMENT RESOURCES

Resources

EFFECTIVE UTILITY MANAGEMENT

Since 2007, Effective Utility Management (EUM) has been a widely accepted and widely used framework for operating and managing utilities in the U.S. water sector. EUM was developed by a group of water utility leaders from across the country, convened by the water sector and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. These executives developed recommendations for EUM, a management strategy applicable to water, wastewater and combined water/wastewater utilities that features ten attributes of effectively managed utilities and five keys to management success.

EUM was [updated in 2019](#) to reflect changes to the water utility operating context over the past decade that have brought about new challenges and opportunities for the nation's water systems, such as accelerated adoption of automated systems and increased climate variability.

To support the implementation of EUM, an [online Resource Toolbox](#) was developed for interested utilities, with a [how-to implementation Primer](#), case studies of successful EUM use and suggested sample performance measures to improve utility management across the sector.

EPA also published [Steps Toward Sustainability: Effective and Sustainable Practices for Creating a More Resilient Water Utility Resource](#). The document provides utilities of various sizes with a series of proven and effective practices that can help them move toward sustainability over time at a pace consistent with their needs and the needs of the communities they serve. Developed with extensive input from utility managers across the country, it is an important supplement to the tools available to the EUM approach.

ARWO Management Resources

ARWO aims to be a knowledge exchange to help regional utility boards and managers enhance their leadership, oversight and management capabilities

ARWO members will be able to take advantage of our unique Regional Water Dialogue program. Members will submit short surveys and questionnaires via the association to their ARWO colleagues on topics such as finance, human resources, customer relations, information technology, infrastructure, water resources, security and other subjects of interest to managers and boards. The association will collect responses and share them back with the ARWO membership. To learn how to send an inquiry to the membership, contact ARWO.



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Contact Us

Address: 1620 I Street, NW Suite 500
Washington, DC 20006

Phone: 202-331-1450

Email: info@arwo.org