From: Taft, Jim [mailto:jtaft@asdwa.org]
Sent: Wednesday, April 01, 2015 4:09 PM
To: Jim Taft
Subject: Synthesis of State Reports from March ASDWA Board Meeting

Good afternoon State Drinking Water Administrators --

Please find attached a synthesis of the individual reports that you provided to your ASDWA Board representatives for their March 4-5, 2015 Board Meeting. I'm always impressed by the span and scope of the programs that you and your staffs implement every day -- and by your steadfast dedication and commitment to public health protection. Thanks for preparing these reports to help us keep our fingers on the pulse. We hope this summary is valuable to you also.

****

Jim Taft
Executive Director
Association of State Drinking Water Administrators
1401 Wilson Blvd.; Suite 1225
Arlington, VA 22209
Jtaft@asdwa.org
Phone: 703-812-9507

jim

SYNTHESIS OF STATE REPORTS
ASDWA BOARD MEETING
March 4-5, 2015

Resources:

Human/Programmatic: While some states reported being fully staffed, several states reported being understaffed and under continuing hiring freezes, especially for state-funded positions. Some noted, with chagrin, the retirement of long-tenured managers or subject matter experts. One program reported going through serious internal upheaval and reorganization – prompted by departures of some key staff. Some states were hopeful of being able to do some limited hiring to backfill critical positions. One state had conducted a staffing survey to help realign staff experience with program priorities. One state had entered into a contract with the state Center for Environmental Training to take on some primacy tasks. One state reported having recently established a HQ section of advanced engineering capacity in water treatment distribution, surface water program implementation, needs assessment, interagency coordination, and emergency preparedness. Two states mentioned needing to transition, due to flat or declining resources, toward a principal focus on the core program – while giving up some elements of a comprehensive state drinking water program. Virtual meetings and teleconferencing were mentioned by one state as a means to stretch program dollars. One state expressed cautious optimism that a number of progressive legislative proposals -- that would bolster various elements of the drinking water program and that had been approved by the Governor – would be enacted by the state's legislature.

Financial: One state reported using ASDWA's state resource needs model to reassess their needs. One state reported claiming more set-asides than they have historically claimed to make up for the lack of a fee increase. One state mentioned plans for initial meetings with stakeholders to garner support for a drinking water fee; another mentioned beginning the process of a significant increase in fees (last updated in the mid-2000s) to account for increased workloads and flat or declining federal support; and a third noted that a legislative proposal to increase service connection fees had moved forward for consideration. Several states mentioned increased dependency on DWSRF set-asides. Two states mentioned decreasing state revenues -- with corresponding impacts on drinking water program budgets -- due to the lower oil and gas prices.

DWSRF: One state observed that prospective loan project demand outstrips available funds and that transfers from the CWSRF to the DWSRF had taken place. Both New York and New Jersey continue to be active in implementing the Disaster Recovery & Investment Act (i.e., Superstorm Sandy funding). One state reported that its DWSRF program had been moved to the state's infrastructure financing authority (called Division of Financial Assistance) which was expected to make funding of projects more efficient and expeditious (given the handbook that governs their operations). One state reported on a citizen's complaint about a project (the charge was later determined to be spurious) that triggered an EPA-IG investigation. One state was establishing a very small system "put-aside" grant program (modeled after Maine's successful program). Several states mentioned ongoing efforts to liquidate ULOs, including new