

RTOC Drinking Water / Wastewater Infrastructure Workgroup
4/10/12 Conference Call

Participants

Tom Keegan, Dry Creek Rancheria
Yolanda Barney, Navajo Nation
Justin Nalder, Bridgeport Paiute Tribe
Marta Burg, RTOC legal advisor
Mariela Lopez, EPA Tribal Office, Water Division
Loretta Vanegas, EPA Tribal Office, Water Division
Linda Reeves, EPA Drinking Water Office

1. Strategic Plan

Participants reviewed the draft Strategic Plan dated 1/30/12, Priority 3: Improve Tribal Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation (see attached). Below are the suggested additions to the plan.

- Context: statistics on need, funding levels
- Summary of what the workgroup has already accomplished (demonstrates usefulness of RTOC)
- Objective D: Technical assistance, collaboration, circuit riders
- Add and maintain technical assistance resources (money or circuit riders).
- Update resource matrix. This workgroup prepared the attached matrix which was last updated in December 2008 (see attached). Also attached is a recent matrix drafted by the Arizona Multi-Agency Tribal Infrastructure Collaborative; MATIC also intends to create a web-based matrix.
- Expand focus to all federal agencies; e.g., include IHS 18% budget cut in 2012 and President's budget for 2013

Navajo used to get circuit rider assistance from states of Arizona and New Mexico (not Utah), but those resources are no longer available. EPA OECA funded a Navajo circuit rider, but that grant ended and now Navajo lacking assistance and really hurting. Rural Water Association is no longer providing assistance to tribes.

EPA's Public Water System Supervision (PWSS) program used to fund tribal technical assistance, but based on an EPA HQ determination, the Region concluded that these funds could not be awarded to a tribe because the purpose of the funds is to achieve an EPA objective (compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act). EPA Region 9 now uses these PWSS funds to hire circuit riders for tribes, and to conduct sanitary surveys of drinking water systems.

Not sure if wastewater has a fair share representation when combined with drinking water. How do the access statistics compare? There are no EPA funds for wastewater technical assistance. IHS can provide assistance, and Rural Water Association used to provide wastewater assistance. EPA's 106 program can fund water quality monitoring for leaky septic systems, but cannot provide technical assistance for those systems. Many years ago, EPA had a Clean Water Act

104(g) program that funded wastewater technical assistance and set up wastewater operator certification training centers, including ITCA.

At RTOC, Tribes will have an opportunity to comment on the draft Strategic plan in the afternoon of May 2. The goal is to have a good draft Strategic Plan by November, with a final plan before the next RTOC election.

2. RTOC 2014 EPA Region 9 Budget Request

Participants reviewed the attached RTOC’s 2013 EPA Region 9 Budget Request dated 4/28/11.

The attached power point presentation shows tribal need and funding levels. The President’s 2013 budget request includes a 15% cut in the SRF. This 15% cuts directly cuts tribal funds by 15%. For states, however, the President’s budget notes that with the \$2B budget, states will have \$6B to support water infrastructure projects.

Expand budget request to add funds for technical assistance to support tribal needs. Separately discuss technical assistance needs for drinking water and wastewater.

During the budget presentation, tribal speakers will tell the story of their own tribe’s needs. Alex Cabillo will give the presentation on 106 and 319, but will not give the water infrastructure needs. Yolanda will see if she can present. Marta will have the budget committee co-chair send a letter of request. If Yolanda or someone else from Navajo cannot present, then maybe Cornelius Antone could give Tohono O’odham’s perspective. Like Navajo, they have some unique water infrastructure needs.

Chart used last year will be updated – it shows that increased funds result in more tribal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitation. Other charts from the attached power point presentation can be considered.

3. Action Items

What	Who	When
1. Update Draft Strategic Plan for session at RTOC 5/2	Marta / All	5/2/12
2. Send letter requesting Yolanda Barney’s presence at the May RTOC to give the water infrastructure section of the budget presentation	??	
3. Update budget chart comparing funding levels with access progress	Linda	4/20/12
4. Participate in RTOC review of the draft strategic plan	All	5/2/12

Attachments

Draft Strategic Plan dated 1/30/12, Priority 3: Improve Tribal Access to Safe Drinking Water and Basic Sanitation

2008 EPA Federal Water Infrastructure Funding Matrix

MATIC matrix

RTOC 2013 EPA Region 9 Budget Request

SRF cuts power point presentation