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Ohio EPA Requests Nominations To Finance 2012 Water Quality Projects

Ohio EPA is accepting nominations through September 16, 2011, for water quality improvement projects seeking financial assistance from next year's Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF). In order to be considered for funding, a project must have been nominated and appear on the state's WPCLF priority list.

Changes to the WPCLF being considered for program year 2012 include:

- combining project planning and design into one loan award for certain projects;
- adding loan eligibility for public wastewater systems that prevent clean water from leaking into household sewer connections;
- allowing a zero percent interest rate for counties and local health departments to start up local home sewage treatment system inspection programs; and
- discontinuing the award of bonus priority points and adding an interest rate discount of 0.1 percent for projects that implement a qualifying sustainable growth plan.

In addition, approximately \$15 million will be offered to public agencies and not-for-profit organizations to carry out projects to protect or restore habitat in Ohio's water bodies under the Water Resource Restoration Sponsorship Program.

The program is administered by Ohio EPA's Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance, with assistance from the Ohio Water Development Authority. Since 1989, the WPCLF has provided more than \$5 billion in community loan assistance, and saved its customers more than \$850 million in interest expense. Ohio EPA estimates that WPCLF loans often equate to grants of 15-38 percent of a project's total cost when compared to conventional finance rates.

New nomination forms will be accepted through September 16 while carry-over projects (those already listed but not awarded by December 31, 2011) need to submit a revised schedule by September 16 to be considered on the 2012 list. Projects may be nominated by following the instructions and forms available at http://www.epa.ohio.gov/defa/newonline_forms.aspx, calling Becky Hegyi at (614) 644-2798 or emailing becky.hegyi@epa.state.oh.us.

The WPCLF provides low-interest loan financing for public wastewater sewers and treatment plants; stormwater pollution solutions - including "green infrastructure" installations; and for the prevention or reduction of nonpoint water pollution sources such as agriculture and home sewage disposal. Certain communities that have very high wastewater user rates and low household incomes may receive additional subsidies in the form of reduced capital expenses for wastewater facility improvement.