

# Strawman

## Regional Water Resources Infrastructure Forum

*(Draft, CPBC meeting, 9/20/13)*

**Planned Event:** Regional Water Resources Infrastructure Forum  
*Co-sponsored effort of MWCOG and WEF to organize a 'regional' forum that would meet COG's objectives and potentially serve as a pilot for WEF's initiative on these issues*

**Timing:** Late fall 2013 (e.g., early/mid-Nov or early/mid-Dec)

### **Background:**

Much of the U.S. water and wastewater infrastructure was built more than a century ago and has reliably worked for years to keep the water flowing in and out of our homes and businesses. In recent years, a lack of investment and priority for this largely invisible network of pipes, tunnels and tanks has resulted in an alarming state of disrepair that threatens the foundation of America's economy and quality of life. The new report by the American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) gave the nation's drinking and wastewater infrastructure a D grade in its [2013 Report Card for America's Infrastructure](#). In a previous report, ASCE warns that unless we bridge the funding gap and adequately invest in our nation's water infrastructure, the U.S. could lose nearly 700,000 jobs by 2020 and if the infrastructure deficit is not addressed by 2040, 1.4 million jobs will be at risk. With needs far outpacing investment, the U.S. is falling behind many developed nations, potentially impacting our ability to compete in a global market. With this crisis comes incredible opportunity – 40 years of data clearly demonstrates that investing in water infrastructure boosts the economy.

### **Objectives:**

- Highlight the importance of water resources infrastructure issues and its need for improved resiliency (i.e., to protect human health, to improve and protect the environment, and to support the region's economy)
- Water resource infrastructure issues to be addressed will include wastewater, stormwater, drinking water, and water quality elements
- Characterize the scope/scale/complexity of the water resource infrastructure in the COG region
- Acknowledge the links between water infrastructure and other infrastructure sectors (e.g., power/energy, transportation)
- Characterize the challenges and opportunities that the water sector faces (e.g., aging infrastructure, affordability, multiple environmental objectives, climate adaptation and/or extreme events, funding needs, jobs generation opportunities, etc.)
- Identify priority actions and opportunities that the region should advance/pursue to ensure continued integrity and sustainability of that water infrastructure

### **Audience:**

- Local elected officials
- Local water resource officials (e.g., Boards)

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- Local utility directors
- EPA/state regulatory managers (Region III, DC, MD, & VA)
- Board of Trade representatives
- Local business representatives
- Insurance industry
- Key federal agency stakeholders (FEMA, GSA, DOD, etc)
- Related professional organization representatives
- Select congressional staffers , etc.

### Other:

- This is an activity in COG's approved FY 2014 Regional Water Quality Management Work Program (endorsed by the Chesapeake Bay and Water Resources Policy Committee)
- Has links to/supports COG's Region Forward and Economy Forward initiatives
- Will be co-sponsored with the Water Environment Federation (WEF) and will likely include partnering with other national and regional organizations
  - Hope to serve as a pilot for how WEF can take national message to a regional scale
- Plays off of various national initiatives on this topic – but will have a local/regional focus (i.e., what our region's issues/challenges/opportunities are)
- Will include the participation of many key local government and utility leaders in the COG region
- Will likely include participation of other near-by regional organizations and governmental entities (e.g., Baltimore, Richmond) – to highlight and strengthen common themes (e.g., 'these are not just local/COG issues' – but without losing the COG-focus)