

Water Environment Federation (WEF)
Stormwater Runoff in the United States Built Environment Position Statement

ISSUE

Urban and suburban stormwater runoff is a growing source of water pollution in many watersheds across the country, contributing nutrients, bacteria and sediment. Further, the existing stormwater infrastructure is aging and underfunded. Stormwater runoff is currently addressed through protection and water quality improvement strategies developed by utilities, municipalities, state governments and the US EPA. However, the nation lacks a comprehensive uniform plan of action at the federal level to cohesively, economically and effectively mitigate stormwater runoff impacts to water quality. Further, funding for research and infrastructure is insufficient at all levels.

Note: WEF recognizes that unregulated non-point source pollution and agricultural runoff also contribute to water pollution in many watersheds. However, this WEF Position Statement is intended to focus only on practices and policies to address water quality issues associated with urban and suburban stormwater runoff in the United States.

WHY SUPPORT THIS POSITION

This position is consistent with our Mission of protecting public health and the environment.

POSITION:

WEF will advocate and promote the following priorities for the effective and efficient management of stormwater runoff in the built environment:

- Support government funding of infrastructure improvements, research, and programs intended to address stormwater runoff. Funding should be reliable, affordable and sufficient for both capital and long-term operation and maintenance costs
- Support modernizing of the Clean Water Act to include appropriate controls and/or regulations on non-point source stormwater runoff
- Advocate for integrated approaches for water quality and quantity that have access to new trading, regulation schemes, and watershed-wide tools for compliance planning and design
- Encourage EPA to identify pollutants in stormwater runoff that are amenable to source control and develop tools to support source control implementation by permit holders
- Accelerate the adoption and advancement of sustainable and resilient stormwater management practices, such as green infrastructure
- Increase public awareness at a local level of the need for better management of stormwater runoff
- Accelerate the adoption of research and innovation into practice in a manner that is coordinated at the federal, state, tribal, MS4 and local partner levels