

METRO CITIES

SUPPORT FOR INFLOW/ INFILTRATION MITIGATION ASSISTANCE

HF 582-HANSEN

Short Description

Metro Cities supports HF 582-Hansen that provides a \$10 million capital appropriation for grants to assist metro area cities to mitigate inflow and infiltration (I/I) problems in municipal wastewater collection systems. Grants would be matched by municipalities. This funding would assist cities in the metropolitan area with making improvements to mitigate inflow and infiltration mitigation at the local level, thereby alleviating the need for the region to add wastewater capacity to address this issue, the cost of which would exceed \$1 billion.

Background

More than 100 metro area communities own and operate local sewer systems that are connected to the regional interceptor system. Currently, over 70 cities are experiencing excess inflow and infiltration. “Inflow” and “Infiltration” are terms for the ways that clear water (ground and storm) makes its way into sanitary sewer pipes and eventually get treated, unnecessarily, at regional wastewater treatment plants. Infiltration occurs when groundwater seeps into sewer pipes through cracks, leaky joints or deteriorated manholes. Inflow occurs when private property owners illegally connect rain leaders, sump pumps or foundation drains to the sewer system.

I/I uses capacity in regional sewer pipes that is necessary to convey wastewater. Excess I/I in one community can cause backups in another and affect the development capacity of cities downpipe. Further, when sanitary sewers cannot handle increased I/I, spillages occur, creating public health risks and environmental impacts to our state’s waters. If excess inflow and infiltration issues are not addressed through necessary repairs and upgrades to local infrastructure, additional regional sewer capacity will be needed at a cost projected to be upwards of \$1 billion. Addressing the problem locally is more effective and efficient for the system and the region’s ratepayers.

To address the problem, the Metropolitan Council established an I/I surcharge program to identify unacceptable amounts of clear water into the wastewater treatment system. The surcharge is waived when cities undertake work to mitigate the problem. Cities are working to correct the problems, often at considerable expense, but recently released data shows that levels of I/I have decreased by 90 billion gallons over the last 10 years due to these efforts.

Cities need to continue work to mitigate I/I to acceptable levels. Many cities face significant challenges in addressing I/I without serious impacts on their local budgets. These funds will be used to assist cities with these critical, basic infrastructure costs.

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