



# Urban Mayors Press

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE NEW JERSEY URBAN MAYORS ASSOCIATION

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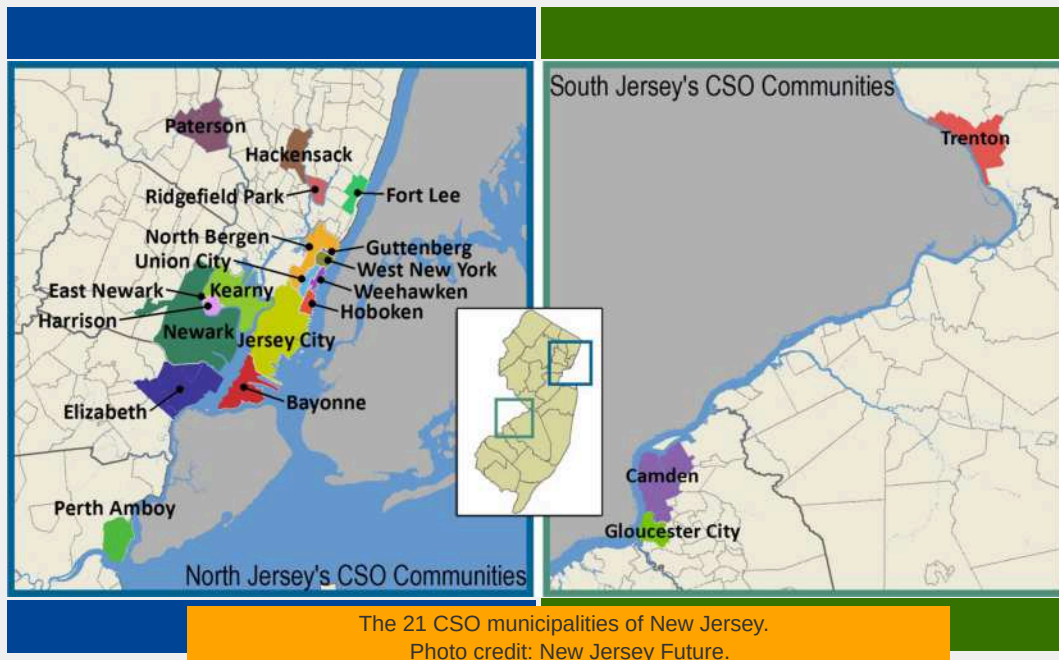
City of Trenton Leads Neighborhood  
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## & Many More

# New Jersey Can't Wait 40 Years To Fix Sewage Overflows

By Andy Kricun, Principal, Moonshot Missions; Vincent Rubino, Vice President, Wastewater Treatment Practice Lead, Wade Trim; and Andrea Jovie Sapal, Program Manager, Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers Campaign, New Jersey Future



Earlier this year, New Jersey reached a historic milestone in its efforts to achieve cleaner, healthier waterways. All combined sewer overflow (CSO) Long-Term Control Plans (LTCPs), along with their associated five-year permits, have been released and publicly reviewed. At the time of writing, six of the seven regional plans have been finalized.

The implementation strategies outlined in these permits require significant infrastructure investments. As a result, many plans span 30 to 40 years to make costs manageable for local communities and utilities. However, this extended timeline means that improved water quality goals may not be fully realized for a generation or more.

This regulatory milestone, combined with a new gubernatorial administration, presents both opportunities and challenges. Among them is the looming fiscal cliff, including anticipated reductions in federal water infrastructure funding. To stay on track and avoid delays, CSO municipalities must pursue innovative and flexible financing strategies.

## Local and Creative Funding Solutions

As costs rise and affordability pressures increase, expanding financing options is critical. Potential approaches include:

- **Longer-term bond structures**

Many CSO mitigation projects, such as treatment plant expansions, pipelines, and tunnels, have useful lives of 100 years or more. Financing should reflect that longevity. Otherwise, a single generation bears the full cost of infrastructure that will benefit many. For example, Washington, D.C., issued a 100-year bond to fund CSO improvements, distributing costs more equitably over time.

- **Use of New Jersey Infrastructure Bank (I-Bank) funding**

The NJ I-Bank offers low interest rates—sometimes as low as 1%—and repayment periods of up to 45 years for eligible projects. These terms can significantly reduce annual debt service and minimize rate impacts for customers. However, current loan durations still fall short of matching the full lifespan of some infrastructure.

- **Dedicated local revenue mechanisms**

Stormwater fees and utilities can create a fairer system for funding infrastructure. In many CSO communities, ratepayers disproportionately shoulder costs driven by large impervious surfaces like parking lots and garages. Stormwater fees help ensure those contributing most to runoff also contribute to solutions.

- **Regional and county-level approaches**

Regional authorities, such as the Passaic Valley Sewerage Commission and the Camden County Municipal Utilities Authority, can play a critical role. Their broader financial capacity and operational scale can support faster, more cost-effective implementation of CSO mitigation projects.

Expanding funding strategies not only improves affordability but can also accelerate project timelines, reducing sewage overflows into streets, basements, and waterways sooner. Advancing investments that mitigate flooding and eliminate CSOs should remain a top priority for municipal leaders.

We invite mayors and municipal officials in CSO communities to join the conversation by contacting Jersey Water Works ([info@jerseywaterworks.org](mailto:info@jerseywaterworks.org)) and the Sewage-Free Streets and Rivers campaign ([info@sewagefreenj.org](mailto:info@sewagefreenj.org)).