



**CITY OF RUTLAND  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS  
RUTLAND, VERMONT**

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House Committee on Corrections and Institutions  
115 State Street  
Montpelier, VT 05633-5301

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Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for the invitation to testify regarding the current proposed budget as it relates to the Agency of Natural Resources state matching funds for the *Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) clean water and drinking water state revolving funds* and the *municipal pollution control grants*. The City of Rutland strongly supports the Governor's proposed budget related to these two extremely important line items.

The City of Rutland, like most other municipalities, faces significant challenges with respect to its aging infrastructure. The City has spent millions upon millions of dollars replacing infrastructure that is functionally obsolete. However, the simple fact of the matter is that without significant subsidies, loan forgiveness and pollution control grants, the City will continue to lose ground.

Rutland City's water distribution system which consists of over 83 miles of water main is antiquated. More than 30 miles of water main is over 100 years old, 22 miles of which are over 125 years of age. Not only does the system continue to age, but many of the components are undersized and do not function according to modern standards. A study performed in-house a decade ago indicated that it would take an investment of \$1 million a year for 100 years to bring the water system into a reliable, sustainable condition. The City heavily depends on the drinking water state revolving fund to help finance these projects.

One of the major issues that continues to plague Rutland is our combined sewer overflows (CSOs). The manner in which this city was developed results in the discharge of millions of gallons of combined sewage (wastewater & stormwater) annually into East Creek and Otter Creek. The City has been working and spending money on this problem for decades. Within the last decade, this city has completed two major sewer separation projects, which has resulted in a noticeable positive impact. However, the goal of eliminating CSOs all together will take additional decades and will cost hundreds of millions of dollars. More specifically, the City's environmental consultant completed a CSO Long Term Control Plan in 2022, which identified 22 separate CSO abatement projects. Collectively, these projects were estimated to cost approximately \$135 million in 2022 dollars. The approach to mitigate and ultimately eliminate CSOs is a combination of separation, storage and treatment strategies. Designing and constructing these projects will be an immense effort. This community is unphased by such a significant challenge and has the willingness to face it

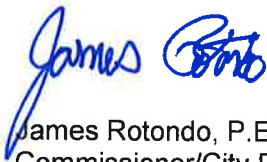
head on. The only lacking factor is the funding. Support from the State is absolutely critical and necessary to solving this city's combined sewer overflow problem.

Rutland City owns and operates the largest wastewater treatment facility in the state. We just completed a \$3.5M wastewater plant upgrade that would not have been possible without the pollution control grant that we received. The completion of this project was crucial to the operation of this plant. We are extremely grateful for the financial assistance on this project, but at the same time recognize that many more improvements and updates are needed at this treatment facility. If some of these projects are not addressed, there could be negative impacts to the Rutland Region as a whole. For instance, this plant is a regional sludge processing facility that receives and digests sludge from 16 surrounding communities. Our sludge processing equipment is over 25 years old and needs upgrades. The final dewatered sludge expelled from the plant then needs to be disposed of. Unfortunately, landfill costs are rising exponentially. Furthermore, landfill capacity for the acceptance of this material is effectively shrinking. As a result, the City is about to begin investigating new technology that will either drastically reduce the amount needed to be disposed of, or convert the sludge into usable products. This will be extremely expensive. Pollution control grants are a necessity to a community like ours that are in need of major upgrades and expansions.

As previously stated, Rutland is not alone with regards to aging infrastructure. What is unique to this city is the fact that it's a financially disadvantaged community. Our median household income is below, and our unemployment rate is above the state averages. Pollution control grants continuously serve as a critical funding source for the City of Rutland. If the State of Vermont is not able to adequately support these grants and the IJJA funding, Rutland simply will not be able to afford to construct projects that improve our water distribution system at an acceptable rate, mitigate CSO pollution to the State's waterways, and rehabilitate treatment and processing facilities that our region, as a whole heavily relies upon.

We appreciate all the assistance that the State of Vermont has provided in the past, and are hopeful that you continue to do so by supporting the Governor's budget as proposed.

Sincerely,



James Rotondo, P.E.  
Commissioner/City Engineer