



# NEWS

## The United States Conference of Mayors

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### **Mayors' Water Survey Cites Catastrophic Events and Severe Water Shortage in 20 Years**

#### *Mayors Say More Attention, Resources Needed to Rebuild America's Crumbling and Aging Infrastructure*

**Albuquerque, NM**— On the heels of two devastating hurricanes, The U.S. Conference of Mayors, led by Conference President and Long Beach, California Mayor Beverly O'Neill, along with Albuquerque Mayor Martin Chavez, Chair of the Conference of Mayors Urban Water Council, released the findings of a National Urban Water Resources Survey today during a press conference in Albuquerque.

The survey of 414 cities, which was conducted prior to the recent hurricanes, sounds the alarm on “everyday” infrastructure problems as well as catastrophic events.

#### **The survey outlines the Mayors' “Top 10” list of water concerns, which include :**

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|----------------------------------|--|
| 1) Aging Water Infrastructure    | 6) Flooding                                  |
| 2) Water Infrastructure Security | 7) Emergency Planning, Storms and Hurricanes |
| 3) Water Supply Availability     | 8) Drought Management                        |
| 4) Unfunded Federal Mandates     | 9) Regional Conflict over Water Use          |
| 5) Water Quality of Rivers       | 10) Water Rights                             |

These results show that “everyday” issues like maintaining, replacing and building water infrastructure remain critical challenges for cities. Although cities have been extremely active in committing their own funds to major capital investments in water and wastewater infrastructure, there is still a tremendous need for additional infrastructure investment.

Mayors are also concerned about protecting people and property from catastrophic events like natural disasters including floods, storms and hurricanes, as well as securing water systems from man-made disasters like terrorism. “Hurricanes Katrina and Rita make apparent the devastating impact that water can have on a community. We have seen first-hand how water can wipe out entire communities,” O'Neill said. “That is why this water survey is invaluable because it tells us what cities really need.”

Most alarming is a city's challenge to provide adequate water supply, particularly with aging water infrastructure and questions about how to finance future water infrastructure investment. **The survey shows that nearly 40% of the cities surveyed will not have adequate water supply in 20 years.**

Additionally, dealing with Congressional unfunded mandates remains a serious problem for mayors. Currently major funding is directed toward water legislation and regulation instead of infrastructure improvement where it is sorely needed. This has left many cities unprepared for man-made and natural disasters, as witnessed by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.

“It is time for this country to focus more attention and resources to find common sense solutions to rebuild our crumbling and aging water infrastructure,” said Chavez.

The final results of this Water Survey will be available on The U.S. Conference of Mayors website at [www.usmayors.org](http://www.usmayors.org) on November 1, 2005.