FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
June 19, 2012

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The U. S. Conference of Mayors Praises EPA’s Newly Released Integrated Planning Framework

Framework Marks Major New Milestone Modernizing EPA’s Implementation of the Clean Water Act

Washington, D.C. - The U.S. Conference of Mayors welcomes the release of EPA’s Integrated Planning Framework for implementing the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Framework, (also known as IP3), is designed to promote greater flexibility for cities struggling to finance and maintain existing wastewater infrastructure and services and respond to new federal regulations that expand city responsibilities, such as costly control of stormwater and sewer overflows.

The Framework outlines several key principles to guide how EPA will work with cities and utilities "...to implement an integrated approach to meet their wastewater and stormwater program obligations under the CWA." The Framework contains a description of the elements that should be included in an integrated plan. EPA states that cities can ask the Agency to work with them and state regulators on integrated plans whether or not they are in a consent decree agreement, or are developing one.

Tom Cochran, CEO and Executive Director of the Conference stated, “We are delighted to receive the Integrated Planning Framework from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and look forward to working closely with the Agency in our cities and regions to move forward on clean water goals that are affordable and sustainable.”

Cochran added, "The Framework provides a way for the federal, state, and local government, as well as the citizens in our cities, to rebuild a partnership to solve water quality issues. It establishes a formal recognition by EPA that unfunded mandates should consider a city’s limited resources, and that they can work together to direct local investments that address our most pressing water quality, public health and environmental issues."

The Conference will continue to work with its member cities and the EPA to implement this important new approach to making progress on clean water goals and determine how to deal with critical issues such as: affordability and fiscal impact on our most vulnerable households (low, moderate and fixed income households); moving away from enforcement driven consent decree actions to planning and partnering with EPA; and how to merge consideration of drinking water mandates simultaneously with CWA obligations.

"The EPA has, with the issuance of this policy, opened the door to cooperation. It signals a modernization of the regulatory approach, and provides a foundation from which adversarial relations can now morph back into the intergovernmental partnership that cities value so much," concluded Cochran.

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The U.S. Conference of Mayors is the official nonpartisan organization of cities with populations of 30,000 or more. There are 1,210 such cities in the country today, and each city is represented in the Conference by its chief elected official, the mayor. Find us at usmayors.org, on facebook.com/usmayors, or follow us on Twitter at twitter.com/usmayors.