



CASQA Position Paper: Discussion Points for Creating a New Stormwater Category on the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card

PURPOSE: This document provides information to help implement the following portion of CASQA's *Vision and Strategic Actions for Managing Stormwater in the 21st Century*, version 1.1, and is related to the State Water Board's STORMS Projects listed below:

- **Vision Action 3.2:** Create Statewide Message that Establishes Stormwater as a Resource
 - Goal: Develop a message and outreach materials promoting stormwater as a resource for use in public education
 - Objective: 3 – Implement a public outreach plan
- **Related STORMS Project:**
 - 1d. Develop and Establish a Monetary Value of Stormwater
 - 2a. Increase stakeholder Collaboration to Promote Stormwater as a Resource

RATIONALE: The stormwater sector has not historically invested in public education for stormwater, defining what it is, what its beneficial uses are, what impacts its beneficial uses, and what is needed to protect and improve stormwater quality. Stormwater protection programs are chronically underfunded, in part due to a lack of public support. The public must understand the problems with stormwater quality, the benefits of improving stormwater quality, and the costs to complete these actions.

GOAL / AUDIENCE: The National Municipal Stormwater Alliance, in association with the American Society of Civil Engineers, would like to create a new category on the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card (IRC) for stormwater. The IRC is published every four years at both the state and national level. A stormwater category on the report card would be an effective way to educate the public on the environmental and fiscal challenges of the sector. The IRC provides letter grades (from A, being the best, to F, being the worst) for selected categories of America's infrastructure. The IRC is the definitive assessment of the condition of the nation's infrastructure.

STRATEGY: The purpose of this fact sheet is to make CASQA members aware of the effort to include stormwater as a category on both the California Infrastructure Report Card and the National Infrastructure report card, both of which are developed and published by ASCE.

Two key talking/comment points have been identified that CASQA members can use to explain this project.

1. The ASCE Infrastructure Report Card currently contains infrastructure categories necessary for the function of urban, suburban and rural quality of life. Categories for such items as dams, bridges, and aviation are apparent in their value and function to the public. Stormwater management infrastructure is also vital to the function and protection of public and private property, but its existence, value and costs are largely unknown to the public and elected officials. Inclusion of stormwater on the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card will help to eliminate this knowledge gap and foster an environment more amenable to developing long-term funding sources to support stormwater programs and infrastructure.

CASQA Position Paper: Discussion Points for Creating a New Stormwater Category on the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card

2. Inclusion of stormwater as a category in the ASCE Infrastructure Report Card will assist municipal separate storm sewer systems (MS4s) in helping to change how the public views and values water. Stormwater is a resource, with value in the environment as well as for commerce, yet it is currently viewed largely as a waste and not well integrated into community plans for water supply. Providing information on the value of stormwater to the public will help to allow planners to develop comprehensive water plans for urban areas with the objective of the use and reuse of water locally, reducing the need to import water from other areas.

The current ASCE IRC can be viewed at the following link: <https://www.infrastructurereportcard.org/>

It was last published in 2017 and will next be published in 2021. With CASQA's help, the new stormwater category will appear in the 2021 report card.