2.5 Water and Wastewater Infrastructure

$3.4 to $7.7 billion is the range of estimated costs to build the infrastructure necessary to switch from irrigation using groundwater to surface water irrigation in the nine major river basins in the East Arkansas WRPR. The cost of this infrastructure should be considered in the context of the $9.7 billion annual market value of agricultural products in Arkansas. The Grand Prairie Area Demonstration Project and Bayou Meto Water Management Project, when complete, will provide surface water sources for irrigation to 15 percent of the area with projected groundwater gaps. Arkansas water providers will need $5.74 billion and wastewater providers will need $3.76 billion to build, maintain, and replace required infrastructure through 2024. New levels of treatment require additional capital and increase operational costs. Small water and wastewater providers pose a unique challenge when planning at the statewide level, as their individual needs are small and widespread, but together they make up a large portion of the needs. Many of these providers also face the challenge of shrinking population and resulting in reduced revenue streams, following the national trend of increased urban dwelling. Complexity of regulations and lack of financial resources make finding and retaining trained operational and managerial personnel difficult for small systems.

Recommendations for 3.4 or 3.7 not sure how they fit. Originally thought 3.4, but probably some of them in 3.7.

The following are recommended to address additional issues facing water resources development projects and water and wastewater systems:

1.Seek additional authority to issue an additional $300 million under the Water, Waste Disposal, and Pollution Abatement Facilities General Obligation Bond Program.

2. Encourage the continued federal funding of the Clean Water and Drinking Water Revolving Loan Funds by the US Environmental Protection Agency and fund obtain the required State match funds.

3. Encourage the continued funding of the US Department of Agricultural Rural Development Community Program and Water –Wastewater Program to assist small communities and rural water systems in the State.

4. Encourage the continued federal funding of the Community Development Block Grant Program to the State and continue to use a significant portion of funds provided to the state for water and wastewater projects to serve the low to moderate income citizens of the State.

5. Increasing the State funding of the State's Water Development Fund and Water, Sewer and Solid Water Fund through additional General Revenue and General Improvement Funds.

6. Continue the use of the Water Wastewater Advisory Committee to coordinate funding of water and wastewater projects. Explore the possibility that the Committee might play an additional role in the coordination of regulatory and funding governmental agencies with respect to water and wastewater systems.

7. Better coordinate and seek additional resources to assist water and wastewater systems with technical, managerial and financial capacity. Train system operators, mangers, and system governing boards on actions necessary steps for long term system viability. Work with systems representative and governmental agencies to develop standards for systems viability and consider the application of these standards to all systems.

8. Working with system representatives, determine and work to remove the factors deterring the cooperation, joint operation or merger of water and wastewater systems. ANRC will seek the authority to merge water and sewer systems where necessary in order to bring them into economic viability.