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Despite Federal Infrastructure Cuts, EPA's WIFIA Water Loan Program Holds Promise.

More than six months into the Trump presidency, uncertainty still surrounds any potential federal infrastructure plan. Instead, the only formal movement is from Congress, where the annual appropriations process includes proposed eliminations or significant cuts to major programs within the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and many other agencies.

Despite these rollbacks, though, there is one nascent infrastructure effort that continues to gain bipartisan support and is setting new precedent for federal, state, and local collaboration: the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.

Initially enacted by Congress in 2014, the WIFIA program represents a new type of federal credit assistance program designed to provide low-cost loans and loan guarantees to eligible borrowers for a range of water and wastewater projects across the country. WIFIA, in turn, not only represents an innovative tool that can unlock additional investment, but it also serves as a useful model for federal leaders to consider as they experiment with more cost-effective financing strategies across all types of infrastructure in years to come.

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