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New Report Explores Developing Action Agenda to Transform New Jersey's Urban Water Systems

RACINE, Wis. (August 28, 2014) –The state of New Jersey and its oldest and largest cities have a tremendous opportunity to transform urban communities while addressing combined sewer overflows and other water infrastructure challenges, according to a *Charting New Waters* (CNW) report released today by The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread.

[*Developing an Agenda for Change for New Jersey's Urban Water Infrastructure*](#) is the product of a meeting convened by The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, New Jersey Future, and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, which brought together a diverse group of New Jersey leaders to develop an agenda for change aimed at catalyzing action to address urban water infrastructure challenges in the state.

“When New Jersey Future and the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation suggested we partner with them in an effort to catalyze changes in New Jersey’s cities, we immediately knew this was a great opportunity to apply and leverage what we have learned through our CNW convenings,” said Lynn Broaddus, Director of the Environment Program at The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread. “We have learned that new ideas emerge when we bring together experts with different experiences and perspectives and New Jersey was the perfect state in which to put our convening model to the test.”

The May meeting participants developed a set of recommended priority action steps they believe can catalyze the transformation of urban water infrastructure throughout New Jersey. In order to stave off crisis and position New Jersey’s cities for prosperous futures, the report offers principles that say public, private and nongovernmental partners need to ensure necessary investments are made to design, construct and maintain 21st century water infrastructure that:

- **Strengthens Cities:** Protects public health and the environment and enhances the attractiveness, livability and safety of cities, while making them more resilient to extreme weather events and natural disasters.
- **Enables Economic Growth:** Reliably and efficiently delivers safe and adequate drinking water, wastewater and stormwater management services that meet the needs of city residents and businesses today and into the future.
- **Leverages Modern Practices:** Employs state- of-the-art technologies and best management practices that generate multiple benefits – economic (cost savings, job creation, new businesses), environmental (improved water quality) and social (better quality of life).

- **Reduces Flooding and Energy Use:** Reduces localized flooding from storms, water main breaks and sewer overflows, and enhances energy efficiency to reduce both water utility costs and air pollution.

Alongside the report, The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread invited seven participants to contribute additional thoughts to its online dialogue, [Inspiring Solutions](#) – an online forum to convene, share ideas, and find innovative solutions with sustained impact. Participants were asked to dive deeper into the state of New Jersey’s urban water infrastructure. *Inspiring Solutions* features responses from Chris Sturm, Senior Director of State Policy at New Jersey Future; Peter Kasabach, Executive Director at New Jersey Future; Kim Gaddy, Environmental Justice Organizer at Clean Water Fund; Debbie Mans, Executive Director at the NY/NJ Baykeeper; Anthony Perno, Chief Executive Officer at Coopers Ferry Partnership; Chris Daggett, President and CEO at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation; and Margaret Waldo, Environment Program Director at the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

The dialogue and report are part of [Charting New Waters](#), an initiative of The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, bringing together experts to examine freshwater challenges, successes, innovations and potential solutions that can bridge geographies and inform national policy. Spearheaded by the Foundation for the past six years, *Charting New Waters* is the work of a diverse group of leaders from business, agriculture, academia and environmental organizations that have publicly committed to improving U.S. freshwater resources by advancing the principles and recommendations of the group. These recommendations were captured in a consensus report: *Charting New Waters: A Call to Action to Address U.S. Freshwater Challenges* issued in Sept. 2010. Download the report [here](#).

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[The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread](#) is dedicated to serving as a catalyst for change by bringing together leading thinkers and inspiring new solutions on major environmental and regional issues. For additional information about *Charting New Waters*, or to learn more about The Johnson Foundation at Wingspread, please visit www.johnsonfdn.org.