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## **Aqua New Jersey Pitches Municipalities on Benefits of Partnering with Private Water and Wastewater Utilities**

HAMILTON, N.J.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Aqua New Jersey, Inc. (Aqua) courted several municipalities at the New Jersey League of Municipalities event this week in Atlantic City, New Jersey.

"One of the biggest benefits to municipal water and wastewater systems doing business with private utilities like Aqua New Jersey is the capital we can bring to the table to invest in much-needed infrastructure improvements and replacements," said Aqua President Nicholas Asselta. "The benefits are many and include not only the benefit of the facilities that are renewed, but the economy benefits through the creation of local living wage jobs and new real estate tax benefits for communities."

Asselta said that the infrastructure issues facing the nation and some of its oldest cities cannot be fixed by any single entity. "With tens of thousands of primarily small water systems in this country, the infrastructure problems require the attention of both private and public utilities. Aqua New Jersey is fortunate to be able to fund its capital programs and can partner with municipalities in public-private partnerships to help them do the same," said Asselta. "Municipal officials are often forced to struggle with decisions to raise rates and keep the water and wastewater systems structurally, operationally and financially sound because rate increases—however necessary—are unpopular and often compete with other important interests including funding for police, fire and education." Asselta said Aqua has invested approximately \$10 million on infrastructure improvements for its customers in 2013.

Asselta said that these decisions have often led municipalities to sell their assets to utilities like Aqua New Jersey, and while his company has purchased several systems, the utility can also provide a public-private partnership option that would enable Aqua to make capital investments, operate and manage the systems while the municipality continues to own the assets. "It's important that municipal officials understand that there are multiple means by which a private utility like Aqua can help with their water and wastewater infrastructure challenges. That's the primary reason we are participating in this conference."

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Drinking Water Infrastructure Needs Survey and Assessment, which estimates a 20-year capital investment need of \$334.8 billion for public water systems. The American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) Report Card on America's Infrastructure gave a grade of "D" to the nation's water and wastewater systems.

Aqua New Jersey provides water and wastewater service to more than 165,000 people in 22 municipalities throughout Warren, Hunterdon, Burlington, Mercer, Monmouth, Camden, Gloucester and Ocean counties in the Garden State. Visit [www.aquaamerica.com](http://www.aquaamerica.com) for more information.

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