

PROJECT PRIORITY POINT SYSTEM

INTRODUCTION

Multi-Year SRF Priority List

Maine's SRF was established to provide a perpetual funding mechanism for communities and districts with wastewater facilities. This list contains the State's inventory of wastewater facilities and the SRF is a source of funding to each one, should they choose to use it. Each year the DEP will prepare an Intended Use Plan (IUP) and projects will be selected from this list and assigned an environmental priority by the Environmental Priority Point System at that time. However, if there are enough funds, any entity on the Multi-Year Priority List or the Sand/Salt Storage Areas list may apply for an SRF loan during the fiscal year.

Municipal Landfills

In 1996, the 117th Maine Legislature expanded the eligible use of the Maine State Revolving Loan Fund (SRF) to include the remediation of municipal landfills that effect groundwater.

Sand/Salt Sheds

Beginning in 2004 the DEP will provide SRF funds to municipalities to design and construct sand/salt sheds in areas that the DEP has determined that ground water or surface water has been contaminated by uncovered sand/salt piles. In 2013 the DEP expanded this eligibility, as authorized under the CWA for protection of water quality, to include all uncovered municipal sand/salt piles.

ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITY POINT SYSTEM

The Department of Environmental Protection has established an Environmental Priority Point System to place proposed wastewater treatment projects in a listing according to their relative priority of environmental impact or benefit. The system contains five (5) basic priorities which relate to the public health hazard created by the wastes or to the use of the waters to which wastes are discharged. In addition to these five basic priorities there is a subsystem with point values of 0, 6 or 12 points that indicates the intensity of the problem as being either low, medium or high. The subsystem points are added to the priority base points to arrive at the overall Environmental Priority Points for ranking the environmental importance of projects. Additional points will be awarded to projects to further rank them for the distribution of loan subsidization in the form of principal forgiveness. The details on the additional subsidization and awarding of points are described further on page 26 in the section entitled *2018 CWSRF Wastewater Infrastructure Project Priority Ranking System*.

All five priorities and the subsystems are discussed in detail below.

Base Points

Priority 1 Water Supply Protection 30 Points

The project to be funded will eliminate a source of ground or surface water supply contamination. This priority denotes that a potential public health hazard does exist and that without such project alternative sources of water would be required or additional water treatment would be necessary.

Priority 2 Lakes Protection 25 Points

This priority denotes that the project will eliminate or improve facilities discharging directly or indirectly to lakes and ponds which create detrimental impacts on trophic state.

Priority 3 Shellfishery Protection 20 Points

This priority includes projects that will eliminate sources of contamination to shell fishing areas. The project will eliminate sources of waste that are partially or wholly responsible for a shellfishery area presently being closed.

Priority 4 Water Quality Concerns 15 Points

This priority denotes that the project will reduce the level of pollutants to waterbodies of present classification or where a proposed project can be expected to raise quality to the next higher classification.

Priority 5 Facility Needs 10 Points

This category includes all structural deficiencies of collection, transport and treatment systems. Such things as untreated sewage creating a public health hazard, a project to meet general water quality standards or a treatment plant not meeting effluent criteria would be in this category.

PRIORITY SUBSYSTEMS

The priorities of water supply and shellfisheries involve other agencies in the state. The Maine Center for Disease Control – Division of Environmental Health is responsible for the water supply program in Maine (Priority 1). The Department of Marine Resources manages shellfishing areas (Priority 3). Accordingly, these agencies have developed the subsystems which relate to the intensity of the problem for these priorities. DEP staff has developed the subsystems for priority 2, 4 and 5. Inland Fish and Wildlife is the agency responsible for management of inland and anadromous fisheries. DEP receives input from Inland Fish and Wildlife when water quality problems impact these fisheries.

The intensity of the problem (Low, Medium, and High) is identified by the subsystem for that category. The agency having jurisdiction applies the subsystem to each project in their category of responsibility. For example, if a category 3 project (Shellfishery Protection) was determined to be a medium intensity problem by the Department of Marine Resources it would be assigned 26 points on the priority list (3-M). Several projects may be in the same category and assigned equal points. The second regular session of the 113th Legislature included median household income, MHI, as a factor in determining funding priority. Projects with the same point assignment will be ordered by MHI with the lowest income community receiving the highest priority within that subsystem category.

Environmental Priority Points Assignment

	Low	Medium	High
1. Water Supply Protection	30	36	42
2. Lakes Protection	25	31	37
3. Shellfishery Protection	20	26	32
4. Water Quality Concern	15	21	27
5. Facility Needs	10	16	22

1. Water Supply Protection

Five criteria are used in this subsystem with each having a point value of 1, 2, or 3 points. The summation of criteria points assigned in criteria 1 – 5 determines the level of intensity (low, medium, or high). The assignment to a level of intensity is arrived at as follows:

<u>Subsystem Points</u>		<u>Criteria Points</u>
Low	(0)	Range (0 – 5)
Medium	(6)	Range (6 – 10)
High	(12)	Range (11 – 15)

Points

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
1. Population Served	< 2,000	2,000 - 10,000	> 10,000
2. Degree of Dependence on Water Source	Alternate Source	Emergency Source	No Other Source
3. Difficulty of Treatment	Proven		Experimental
4. Existing Treatment	Full	Minimal	None
5. Cost of Treatment	< 1% of Revenue	1% - 10% of Revenue	> 10 % of Revenue

2. Lakes Protection

Subsystem Points

Low	(0)	Facility has minor effect on trophic state of a lake.
Medium	(6)	Existence of marginal trophic quality or increasing trophic conditions.
High	(12)	Conditions exist in a lake which cause non-attainment of class GPA.

3. Shellfishery Protection

Four criteria are used in this subsystem with each having a point value of 1, 2, or 3 points. The summation of criteria points assigned in criteria 1 – 4 determines the level of intensity (low, medium, or high). The assignment to a level of intensity is arrived at as follows:

<u>Subsystem Points</u>	<u>Criteria Points</u>
Low (0)	Range (0 – 4)
Medium (6)	Range (5 – 8)
High (12)	Range (9 – 12)

<u>Criteria</u>	<u>Points</u>		
	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>
1. Shellfish Production	Potential	Limited	Commercial
2. Projected Area Reclassification	Conditionally Restricted	Restricted	Approved or Conditionally Approved
3. Economic Importance	< 10 licenses	10 – 20 licenses	> 20 licenses
4. State & Local Interest	Low Interest	Medium Interest	High Interest

Definition of Terms

Shellfish Production:

Potential	A shellfish growing area is considered to be a potential growing area when all environmental factors (chemical, physical and biological) exist within levels suitable for the propagation of shellfish, or if historical records indicate the area to be one time productive.
Limited	A shellfish area is considered to have limited harvesting when current or past shellfish availability would yield quantities of less than 1 bushel per tide and/or less than 5 acres in size.
Commercial	A shellfish area is considered to have commercial harvesting when current or past shellfish availability would yield quantities greater than 1 bushel per tide and/or greater than 5 acres in size.

Projected Area Reclassification:

Conditionally Restricted	If after abatement, the projected reclassification at best would meet the standards for Depuration and/or Relay Harvesting allowed except during specified conditions (rainfall, sewage treatment plant (STP) bypass or seasonal), then the lowest number of value related points will be given.
Restricted	If after abatement, the projected area reclassification would meet the standards for Depuration and/or Relay Harvesting, then the next highest value related points will be assigned.
Approved or Conditionally Approved	If after abatement, the projected area reclassification would meet the standards for open harvesting, harvesting allowed except during specified conditions (rainfall, STP bypass or seasonal), the highest number of value related points will be given.

Economic Importance:

Value related points will be assigned to those areas where the shellfishing resource is considered to have an economic impact on the local economy. The factor utilized in this determination will be the number of commercial harvesters in the town or towns abutting the resource. Consideration should be taken for past, present and future harvesters.

State and Local Interest (Shellfish Management Program):

Value related points will be given to those areas where a sincere interest in pollution abatement, shellfish management, aquaculture or other related interests in the marine resources has been demonstrated.

Low Interest	Municipal program with open license sales and no conservation requirements, limited enforcement.
Medium Interest	Municipal program with conservation requirements.
High Interest	Strong municipal program with active shellfish committee, conservation requirements, and shellfish warden.

4. Water Quality Concerns

Subsystem Points

Low	(0)	Water quality standards are achieved; however, project would help maintain water quality.
Medium	(6)	Water quality standards are achieved; project would result in improved habitat, production or other enhancement of the fishery or other tangible improvements to water quality.
High	(12)	Water quality standards are not achieved for designated class; project would result in improvements to water quality, but not necessarily bring it into compliance.

5. Facility Needs

Subsystem Points

Low	(0)	A project with the base point assignment has a relatively minor problem by comparison with others in this category. A deficiency exists or the potential for a public health hazard is evident but the operational impact if any is minor and the public health dangers only slight.
Medium	(6)	This sub-priority indicates the existence of a substantial problem that may involve several of the factors in the Facility Needs category. The structural deficiencies cause problems and/or the risk of public health problems is more than slight.
High	(12)	The assignment of this level is made only for those facilities having the most severe structural or operational problems and/or a public health hazard exists.

ADDITIONAL POINTS ADDED TO ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITY POINTS

Each of the following factors is rated as a percent of the environmental priority points determined in the Environmental Priority Point System. The various factors are summed and added to the environmental priority points for a final priority rating score.

1. “Green” projects (criteria stated in guidance by EPA). Projects assigned this factor include green infrastructure, water or energy efficiency improvements or other environmentally innovative activities. While these can be freestanding projects, often they may be elements of larger projects. To evaluate green components, the dollar value of green elements will be determined as a percent of the total project cost. This percent will be multiplied by a constant value of 0.2 to obtain a percentage increase to the environmental priority points.

Increase in points up to: 20%

2. Regulatory requirements. This factor is applied if the project is necessary to meet a regulatory requirement such as a license condition, implementation of required plan or study (e.g. an approved CSO plan or a toxicity reduction plan), or the requirements of a consent agreement or court order.

Required by consent agreement or court order - increase in points: 20%

Other specific regulatory requirement
(E.g. Compliance Initiative Letter, Letter of Warning, Notice of Violation)
- increase in points: 10%

3. Expected degree of success in addressing pollution concerns. This factor reflects the Department’s estimate of how effectively the proposed project will address the local environmental problems for which the environmental priority points were assigned under the Environmental Priority Point System. In rating this factor, the Department recognizes that most projects have inherent limitations and water quality problems often have multiple contributing sources.

Added reliability or decreased discharges – increase points: 5%

Significant reduction of a discharge – increase points: 10%

Elimination of one of several discharges – increase points: 15%

Elimination of a significant discharge – increase points: 20%

Elimination of a sole discharge source – increase points: 25%

4. Regionalization of work. This factor recognizes that some proposed projects may represent efforts by two or more jurisdictions to solve water quality issues of common concern. Often, such effort can be more efficient and make better use of public resources to find cost-effective regional solutions.

Increase in points: 15%

5. Co-funded projects. If an applicant indicates that grant or loan money may be available from other sources (e.g. MDOT, EDI, FEMA, CDBG, State grant, STAG or RD), this has the potential to leverage all available funds with the result of more beneficial projects being done. The Department will consult with the other agencies to determine if grants and/or loans have been applied for the proposed project and the other agencies' intent to fund before assessing these extra points.

Increase in points: 20%