**Why Should You Support NOWRA’s Advocacy Efforts in Washington?**

Does this describe you? Your business is local. You deal with state & county regulators and rules on a daily basis. You’ve built your business to comply with your state’s onsite wastewater code. What happens in Washington, DC has no impact on your day-to-day operations. If it does, you’re probably wondering why you should care.

Actually, you *should care.* What happens in DC affects your wallet and your reputation. Please read on.

For decades, Washington has ignored the onsite wastewater industry, choosing instead to concentrate their money, resources and regulations on municipal sewage treatment. For example:

* Congress and the EPA have given the states more than *$100 Billion* to address wastewater treatment problems. 99.7% of that money has gone to fix sewer systems. Our industry serves 86 million Americans, but we get crumbs.
* EPA’s policies and regulations are overwhelmingly skewed in favor of “Big Pipe.”
  + EPA’s Office of Water has hundreds of employees supporting sewer systems. They have three employees focused on onsite wastewater.
  + EPA’s policies encourage utilities to convert septic systems to sewer. More than four times as much money is spent converting septic systems to sewer than what has been spent to fix failing systems or install new systems.
  + Although we are the “Original Green Infrastructure,” EPA does not recognize onsite systems as green infrastructure. As a result, we don’t have access to the billions being given to utilities to implement green infrastructure initiatives.

In short, Congress and federal regulators have created a set of conditions which heavily favors sewer over onsite systems. As a result of these policies:

* ***You are losing customers*** because their systems are being converted to sewer.
* ***You are losing business*** when your customers can’t afford to fix or replace a failing system. Utilities and their customers have been handed billions to upgrade systems which are out of compliance.
* ***Your tax dollars*** ***are subsidizing users of sewer systems.***
* ***Your company’s reputation suffers*** because federal neglect of onsite systems have given our entire industry a bad name.

**Our industry has a great story to tell and Congress needs to hear it!**

* We protect public health and the environment.
* We are a green technology (by any definition other than EPA).
* We replenish groundwater supplies.
* We treat water to the same levels as municipal water treatment facilities.
* We are the job creators. Nearly everyone in our industry is a small business – the engine of job growth.

The “Big Pipe” folks are well-organized, well-funded and well-known in Washington. While we are taking many steps to level the playing field, the onsite wastewater industry needs your help and support to make that happen.

Right now, the deck is stacked against our industry. At the same time, we represent the interests of the 86 million people. That’s a lot of potential voters. And with the establishment of the Decentralized Wastewater Recycling Caucus in the US House of Representatives, we now have a voice to air our concerns.

The more Members of Congress we can encourage to join the Decentralized Caucus, the stronger our message will become. Most Members don’t even realize that federal wastewater policy shortchanges thousands of their own constituents. That’s why we’re asking you to help change their minds.

***There is strength in numbers***. The more people who become involved in these issues, the more Members of Congress will understand why onsite systems matter to them and their neglected constituents. And the more they know, the more likely we are to be successful in getting more support and a fairer share of federal money.

**So your voice really does matter. Please visit our** [**“How you can take action” webpage**](071812c.membershipsoftware.org/content.asp?admin=Y&pl=291&sl=291&contentid=295) **to learn how you can make a difference.**