

# **Developing the NYS WARN** **Water/ Waste Water Agency** **Response Network**

**A volunteer effort to promote and support statewide emergency preparedness, disaster response, and mutual assistance for water and wastewater utilities**

**The Path to Obtaining Immediate Help and Resources in a Water Sector Emergency**

# A Network of Utilities Helping Utilities

- **WARN organizes utilities within a state through mutual aid agreements**
  - Provides assistance with personnel and resources in emergencies
    - Natural disasters
    - Human-caused disasters
  - Requests and responses are **voluntary**
  - Each responder is reimbursed for labor, materials ect. by the requesting utility

**WARN is not a corporation or a governmental unit !**

# Who's Involved ?

- **Utility Owners / Operators**
- **Professional Organization Representatives**
  - (AWWA, NRWA, WEF, RCAP, Sanitation Assoc ect.)
- **State Water and Wastewater Primacy Agency**
- **State Emergency Management and or Homeland Security**
- **US EPA Regional Representation**

# National Water Sector Organizations

- **Joint Policy Statement endorsing WARN**
  - **8 major water/ wastewater organizations**
  - **Encourages the creation of intrastate mutual aid and assistance networks**
  - **Provides for greater water sector resiliency against natural or human caused disasters**

# What is NYWARN?

- An acronym for “New York Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network
- A mutual aid and assistance network for water and/or wastewater utilities bound by a mutual aid agreement (MAA)
- An MAA can be signed by water and/or wastewater utilities, whether they are publicly or privately owned or operated; for small, medium and large systems

# What NY WARN is not

- **NY WARN is not a club or an organization**
- **It can not be a party to a contract**
- **It can not incur debt**
- **It can not sue or be sued**

# Concepts of a WARN Mutual Aid Agreement (MAA)

- MAA is only for water and/or wastewater utilities to sign
- Pre-arranged to allow for quick utility to utility assistance following damage
- Does not require a formal disaster declaration to invoke MAA
- Each participating utility is responsible for its own actions
- Compliant with National Incident with National Incident Management System (NIMS) requirements
- Rendering of assistance is ALWAYS discretionary

# Why Consider Mutual Aid for the Water / Wastewater Sector ?

## Past disasters responses teach us:

- Utilities must be self-sufficient
- Utilities must fill the gap between disaster onset and arrival of other government aid
- Utility operations are highly specialized :
  - systems and instrumentation
  - distribution and collection systems
  - toxic and explosive concerns
- Qualified and certified personnel are essential

# Benefits of WARN

- Increased planning
- Emergency contact lists
- Enhanced access to specialized resources
- Expedited arrival of aid
  - FEMA is “muscular but not agile”
- Reduced administrative conflict
  - Signed agreement in place
  - Workman’s comp, indemnification, ect. identified
- Increased hope
  - Right resources with the right skills are available

# Benefits of Written WARN Agreements

- **Regulatory benefits**

- Sets terms and conditions for assistance
- Helps with FEMA reimbursements when a federal disaster is declared
- Establishes emergency contacts and protocols

- **Practical benefits**

- Rapid assistance
- Similar knowledge base
- Certified personnel

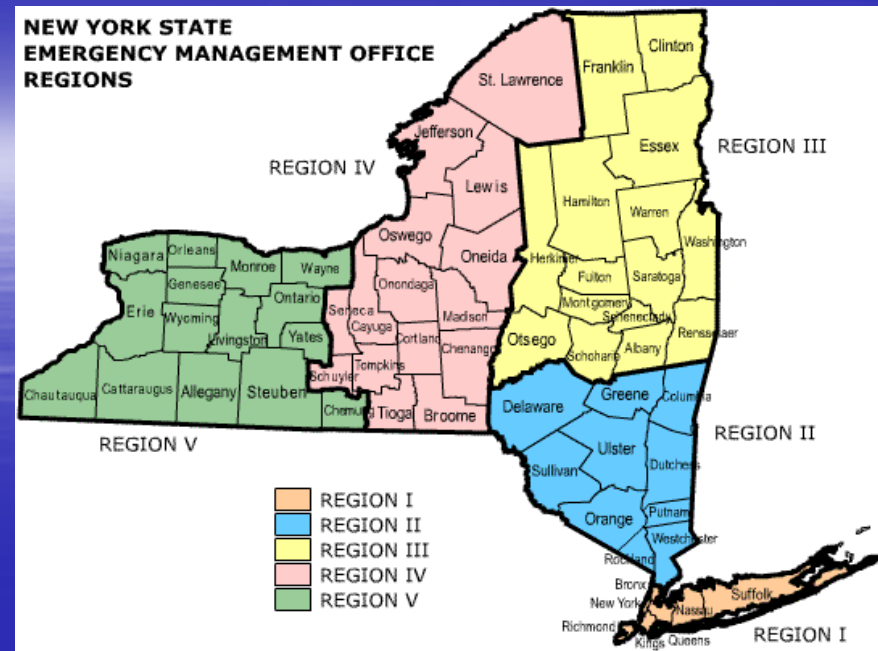
# NYWARN

## Regional Chairs

Acting Chair: Central NY Region  
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Regional Chair: Western NY  
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Regional Chairs: Long Island  
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# Examples of Why a WARN is Important for New York ?

- Ice storms
- Snowstorms
- Floods
- Earthquakes
- Hurricanes
- Storms and storm surges
- Drought
- Terrorism
- Future concerns such as pandemic flu

# The Bottom Line

- All emergencies are local and require a local response capability
- A signed mutual aid agreement will enhance your utility's preparedness and overall resiliency against any disaster
- Low or no-cost action
- Helps ensure the continuity of operations
- Water / Wastewater infrastructure is vital to the well being of every community

# The Bottom Line - Resiliency

- All emergencies are local and require a local response capability.
- A signed mutual aid agreement will enhance your utility's preparedness and overall resiliency against any disaster.
- In its most basic form, a mutual aid and assistance agreement is a low or no-cost action that helps ensure the continuity of operations of the water infrastructure vital to the well being of every community.

# NY WARN To Do List

- Encourage New York's water and/or wastewater utility owners and operators to sign the MAA -  
may require official action by Board or Council
- Officially integrate NYWARN into New York State's  
Emergency Response Plan
- Maintain NY WARN's website- [www.nywarn.org](http://www.nywarn.org)
- Promote the formation of other WARNs in other states, to permit assistance across state lines

# Vision

*A secure and resilient drinking water and wastewater infrastructure that provides clean and safe water as an integral part of daily life. This Vision assures the economic vitality of and public confidence in the nation's drinking water and wastewater through a layered defense of effective preparedness and security practices in the sector*

# References

- **Utilities Helping Utilities: An Action Plan for Mutual Aid and Assistance for Water and Wastewater Utilities**  
[www.nationalwarn.org](http://www.nationalwarn.org)
- **Contamination Warning Systems for Water: An Approach for Providing Actionable Information to Decision-Makers**  
[www.awwa.org/advocacy/Contamination\\_Warning\\_Systems.pdf](http://www.awwa.org/advocacy/Contamination_Warning_Systems.pdf)
- **Morley, K.M., 2007. A Vision and Direction for Water Sector Security and Preparedness Initiatives. *Jour. AWWA*, 99:2:38.**
- **Roberson J. A. & Morley, K.M., 2006. Water Security: Shifting to an All-Hazards Resiliency Approach. *Jour. AWWA*, 98:5:46.**
- **Roberson J. A. & Morley, K.M., 2005. We Need to Get Strategic on Water Security. *Jour. AWWA*, 97:10:42.**