



# The SURF Report

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## SURF President's Perspective: The Impact of EPA's FY 2018 Proposed Budget on Remediation-Related Programs

The White House released its FY 2018 budget, America First, A Budget Blueprint to Make America Great Again, on March 13, 2017. The Administration's initial proposed budget cuts are more extensive for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on a percentage basis than for any other agency or department. The overall EPA proposed budget cuts reduce spending by 31% with an annual reduction from \$8.27 billion to \$5.7 billion and the elimination of 25% of the EPA's 15,000 employees.

Based on an EPA budget memorandum dated March 21, 2017, we identified the following reductions in programs that directly or tangentially could affect the remediation industry and sustainable remediation:

**Superfund** – Reductions in Superfund funding, particularly in non-pay expenses for EPA contractors.

**RCRA Corrective Action** – A modest reduction in the RCRA Corrective Action Program. Over 90% of states have RCRA corrective action authority and, thus, nation-wide, the budget reduction should not profoundly impact RCRA corrective action.

**LUST/UST** – Substantial man-

agement expense reductions and a 56% reduction in state funding. These reductions are likely to affect tank cleanups because states rely on federal funding to administer leaking underground storage tank (LUST)/underground storage tank (UST) programs, including corrective action requirements.

**Brownfields** – Likely minor funding reductions of the grant-portion of the Brownfields Program. However, due to program management budget reductions, the non-grant aspects of the Brownfields Program (e.g., national conference) would be affected if Congress enacts the budget as drafted.

**Geographic Waterway Restoration** – Elimination of the EPA's Geographic Waterway Restoration Programs, as well as federally funded remediation work under these programs.

**Office of Research and Development** – Substantial reduction of human health risk assessment programs and elimination of IRIS, which provides the EPA and remediation community data for establishing cleanup criteria.

**Enforcement** – Profound impact on Superfund enforcement programs. The effect on other

remediation-related enforcement programs is more difficult to ascertain; however, given the overall Enforcement Program reductions, it is probable that the EPA's enforcement activities related to site cleanups will be impacted in some way.

**Climate Change** – Reductions in the Climate Change Program that are likely to affect some remediation programs, such as the integration of green remediation into Superfund and TSCA cleanups; the green remediation initiative; and, more likely than not, the Superfund Climate Change Adaptation Program.

The proposed budget has not been vetted by Congress and, thus, is subject to revision. However, given the substantive proposed EPA budget cuts in the proposal, it is likely that some reductions, although not likely as steep as those proposed, will occur in FY 2018. Ultimately, how these reductions affect the remediation industry is difficult to pinpoint but some reductions along the general lines of those proposed, although potentially not as steep, are more likely than not.

*Contributed by John A. Simon*

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## About SURF

The Sustainable Remediation Forum (SURF) promotes site assessment and remediation that protects human health and the environment while maximizing environmental, social, and economic benefits throughout the project life cycle by:

- Advancing the science and application of sustainable remediation
- Developing best practices
- Exchanging professional knowledge
- Providing education and outreach

## About The SURF Report

This newsletter is published quarterly by the SURF Communications Committee to provide you with highlights of SURF's activities and opportunities and developments in the field of sustainable remediation.

Deadline for newsletter submissions is the 15th of March, June, September, and December for the following quarterly issue.

Contact the Newsletter Editor by email for submittal: Gerlinde Wolf, AECOM, newsletter@sustainableremediation.org

Submissions are subject to editing for space considerations.

Circulation: The newsletter is circulated to about 1000 individuals directly and is posted online at [www.sustainableremediation.org](http://www.sustainableremediation.org).

Address Changes: Please submit to the SURF Secretary at secretary@sustainableremediation.org.

The SURF website, [www.sustainableremediation.org](http://www.sustainableremediation.org), is our primary resource for sharing the latest and greatest news about SURF and sustainable remediation. Our Online Resources page provides a one-stop shop for resources, tools, information, and documents. The Calendar shows remediation, sustainability, and related conferences, as well as deadlines for submitting abstracts. Suggestions for additions and improvements are welcome by using the Contact SURF form on the website or by emailing administrator@sustainableremediation.org.

## SURF 34 Perspectives

The first day of SURF 34, Sustainable Remediation in a Changing Landscape, focused on various perspectives about the future path and drivers of sustainable remediation.

As Keynote, Nicholas Targ (Partner, Holland & Knight) provided his perspectives on the potential implications for federal and state regulatory authorities' implementation of sustainable remediation given the proposed EPA cuts. While questions remain regarding the eventual depth of these cuts, the impacts will be dependent on each state's budget and regulatory framework. At a minimum, cuts will stretch the capacity of federal and state regulators, likely impacting their ability to require or encourage evaluations pertaining to sustainable remediation. In the case of the California Department of Toxic Substance Control (DTSC), Nicholas' state budget evaluation indicated that the proposed EPA cuts are largely offset by state funding, resulting in cuts to the DTSC of less than 5%. Therefore, states that use the largest percentage of federal funding ultimately will be impacted the most.

Regardless whether these cuts occur, Nicholas discussed the following local and regional sustainable remediation drivers that will continue:

**State Regulatory Programs** – Several state programs already promote sustainable remediation [e.g., the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)].

**Sustainable Development** – Developers in areas with high real estate prices or demand are highly motivated to redevelop and remediate.

Case studies were presented which reinforced the importance of these local drivers. The localized nature of sustainable remediation was echoed throughout these case studies and the rest of the presentations during the day.

In the absence of federal drivers, Nicholas further emphasized that the localized application of sustainable remediation and cleanup will raise some concerns regarding environmental justice. Different cleanup levels are accepted by different communities, with different levels of stakeholder engagement. In his experience, affluent communities typically

have a higher demand for cleanup because of the underlying value of the land.

A panel discussion further explored these topics and featured panelists Lenny Siegel, (Center for Public Environmental Oversight), Carrie Crozier (PARSONS), and Norm Dupont (Ring Bender). Sowmya Venkat (PARSONS) moderated the discussion, which centered on who will drive remediation and sustainable remediation in the future. Once again, land value emerged as a primary driving force. Panelists believe that corporate initiatives and nonprofits like SURF will fill any potential void. Framing a contrarian viewpoint, Norm suggested that this political swing is similar to those in the past. That said, panelists agreed that the current uncertainty could result in both a potential retraction and potential opportunity for sustainable remediation in the future.

*Contributed by Mike Smilley*



SURF 2017 Board of Trustees at SURF 34.

From left to right: John Simon, Barbara Maco, Michael Smilley, Lindsay Burton, Paul Hadley, Keith Aragona, and Gerlinde Wolf. Not pictured: Erin Healy and Colleen Liddell.



SURFers at SURF 34 dinner.

## California's SGMA: Implications for and Impacts of Contaminated Groundwater

SURF and California Groundwater Resources Association (GRA) have formed a collaboration to discuss the relationship between California's Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA) and sustainable remediation initiatives for groundwater basins threatened by climate change impacts and unsustainable yields. During SURF 34, Melissa Harclerode (CDM Smith) facilitated a panel exploring the challenges that may arise from managing groundwater quality under multiple regulatory frameworks (e.g., SGMA, Porter-Cologne, California's Hazardous Substance Account Act, Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, Superfund). Based on the presentations and subsequent panel discussion, action items were identified. Summaries of panelists' presentations are provided in the [blue](#) boxes on this and the following pages.

### Potential Challenges

- Reluctance of stakeholders to accept formerly contaminated groundwater that has been treated for potable or non-potable uses
- Lack of regulatory guidance or framework for beneficially using treated groundwater that will otherwise be discarded as a waste

- SGMA-specific activities impacting remedial system operation, monitored natural attenuation performance, and/or unintended consequences of contamination mobilization
- Lack of funding and technical support for Groundwater Sustainability Agencies (GSAs) to effectively manage basins impacted by chemical pollutants or poor water quality (e.g., increase in nitrate due to agricultural runoff)
- Overlapping jurisdiction of GSAs and regulatory agencies managing and implementing groundwater quality remediation projects

### Action Items

1. Educate GSAs on the potential for requirements to manage SGMA-regulated basins that are impacted by contaminated or otherwise degraded groundwater. Provide a resource of technical support contacts and possible funding opportunities. Showcase alignment between SGMA best management practices (BMPs), sustainable remediation BMPs, and the Institute of Sustainable Infrastructure (ISI) Envision™ sustainability criteria.
2. Inform responsible parties and cleanup

- regulatory agencies of SGMA policy and potential implications to current and future remedial systems. Develop sustainability objectives for remediation projects complimentary to SGMA BMPs and groundwater sustainability plan (GSP) objectives.
3. Provide support to overcome risk perception barriers associated with beneficially using treated groundwater and identify new beneficial use opportunities. Share lessons learned and success case studies on beneficial uses of treated groundwater.
  4. Develop and/or identify economic valuation methods to comprehensively quantify the value of water quality and potential beneficial use options. The method will be used to add in the formation and successful implementation of anticipated water markets.

In the near term, SURF and GRA will continue to collaborate and present on the interrelationship of SGMA and sustainable remediation at upcoming conferences.

If you have questions, comments, or would like to join in the collaboration, contact either [Melissa Harclerode](#) or [Jake Torrens](#).

### The Current Role of Collaboration, the Future Role of Remediation, and the Nexus between the Two

As part of the panel discussion described above, Dave Ceppos (Associate Director, Center for Collaborative Policy, California State University, Sacramento) provided background on SGMA policy, formulation of GSAs, and development and implementation of Groundwater Sustainability Plans (GSPs). In addition, Dave discussed the role of stakeholder collaboration as an act of governance and a means to ensure successful implementation of SGMA policy. This shift from government led to collaborative governance can be contributed to the questioning of expert decision-making, loss of trust in elected officials and their surrogates, rising public expectations, and the emergence of big data and social media. Thus, collaboration among not only GSA stakeholders but secondary and tertiary impacted parties (e.g., water corporations, beneficial users, remedial responsible parties) is paramount. Dave also alluded to potential water markets that may be a product of SGMA.

## ***SURF Pilot Mentoring Program***

Attention SURF community! We are currently seeking volunteers to participate in a pilot mentoring program. The objective of the program is to leverage our organizations' senior knowledge so that we can continue to learn from each other's experiences to further drive sustainable remediation. Research indicates that 20% of learning comes from networking and working relations; therefore, mentoring is a critical factor in ensuring the continued growth and legacy of SURF.

Mentors are defined as SURF members with five or more years of experience in environmental remediation; mentees are members with less than five years of experience. Once members have expressed interest in participating in the program, they will receive a brief questionnaire designed to assess interests. Based upon responses, mentors and mentees will be matched.

Please email [secretary@sustainableremediation.org](mailto:secretary@sustainableremediation.org) if you wish to be a mentor or mentee by July 1, 2017.

## ***Upcoming Events and Conferences***

### **33rd Annual International Conference on Soils, Sediments, Water and Energy – October 16-19, 2017 – Amherst, MA**

SURF and AEHS are excited to announce the formation of a conference partnership for the Fall 2017 meeting (see Page 6 for details). [The meeting](#) will feature a strong and diverse technical program with a conference track dedicated to sustainable remediation topics.

### **28th Annual International Conference on Soil, Water, Energy, and Air – March 19-22, 2018 – San Diego, CA**

SURFers are welcomed and encouraged to submit an abstract to the west coast Association for Environmental Health and Sciences Foundation (AEHS) 28th Annual International Conference on Soil, Water, Energy, and Air. For further details and this year's topics of special interest please see the [AEHS call for abstracts flyer](#). Abstracts should be submitted to the online submission form no later than July 7, 2017.

## **Orange County Water District's Experience Collaborating with Stakeholders on Reusing Treated Groundwater**

As part of the panel discussion described on Page 4, Adam Hutchinson (OCWD Recharge Planning Manager, GRA Board Member) presented the complexity of OCWD's groundwater basin comprised of three major aquifer systems that are hydraulically interconnected and an extensive network of 400-plus monitoring wells, 215 potable production wells, and 20 private production wells. Several plumes of contaminated water (approximately 100,000 acre feet) are currently present in the OC Basin. Challenges faced by public water agencies in managing widespread contaminant plumes include the presence of multiple sources and associated responsible parties; multiple regulatory agencies (future GSAs will add to the complexity); and cost recovery due to bankruptcies, extinct companies, and unclear/complex liabilities. OCWD solicited EPA support when needed, involving local agencies and stakeholder in the conception and implementation of groundwater management efforts, issuing a water importation fee, and developing multiple re-use options for a basin. Adam indicated that GSAs may want to take on cleanup efforts to accelerate implementation of GSPs. However, the GSAs will be challenged by available funding and lack of current technical support by existing regulatory agencies working on SGMA. In addition, it is likely beneficial for large projects to include water reuse to avoid undesirable results (per SGMA policy).

## ***SURF at the 33rd Annual International Conference on Soils, Sediments, Water, and Energy***

This fall, SURF is organizing two technical sessions focused on topics of interest to SURF members:

- Sustainability Considerations in Remediation and Restoration
- Climate Change and Resiliency within Sustainable Remediation

SURF members will receive significant registration fee discounts to attend the conferences ([join or renew now!](#)). Separate fees will be charged for optional workshops and luncheons. The Fall 2017 discounted registration fees are as follows:

- Full conference: \$295 (regularly \$550)
- Daily rate, Tues./Weds.: \$150 (regularly \$225)
- Daily rate, Thurs.: \$50 (regularly \$125)

The SURF Membership Meeting will be held on Thursday afternoon and is open to SURF members and invited guests only. During this four-hour meeting, members will be invited to review activities of the previous year, plan and prioritize activities for the coming year, and debate topics of concern. Technical initiative members will set aside time to work together on efforts or provide summary sessions to attendees. The SURF Board of Trustees will provide annual

### **SURF + AEHS**

**Mark your calendars for October 16-19, 2017, when SURF will co-locate our fall meeting in Amherst, Massachusetts, and collaborate with the Association for Environmental Health and Sciences Foundation (AEHS) for the 33rd Annual International Conference on Soils, Sediments, Water, and Energy.**

**Registration opens in July.**

reports related to the organization and its future: the President reporting on the state of the organization, goal achievement, and objectives for the upcoming year; the Secretary providing an update on membership; and the Treasurer presenting an annual financial report. SURF will also continue to host its traditional group dinner, tentatively scheduled for Thursday night. There will be a separate charge (TBD) for this event.

### **Beneficial Uses of Treated Groundwater**

As part of the panel discussion described on Page 4, Jake Torrens (Associate Environmental Scientist, Haley and Aldrich) summarized SURF's Groundwater Conservation and Reuse at Remediation Sites (2014) publication on the state of the practice, challenges, lessons learned, and case studies. Jake stressed the importance of building partnerships and networking cross-disciplines. These partnerships will help lay the groundwork for establishing a strategy that leads to beneficially using treated groundwater that the remediation industry produces and, that otherwise, is managed and discharged as wastewater. The current practice of discharging treated groundwater to storm drains and sewers has lots of room for improvement in this day and age of water scarcity and resiliency planning. The experience gained from the partnering groups will help develop strategies and solutions that address water quality impacts, water balance and reliability, public perception, and liabilities. The SURF/ GRA collaboration can assist with education and outreach on sustainability and resiliency best management practices, as well as help facilitate meaningful stakeholder engagement.

## Thank You to SURF's Sponsors:

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## Get Social with SURF!

**Do you have sustainable remediation news to share? We have several ways to get your words out!**

**In addition to [SURF's website](#), you can find us on [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#).**

**SURF Communications Committee also manages a LinkedIn group, which can be used to spread the word about case studies and project successes, ask questions, solicit feedback, and connect with fellow SURF members.**

**To join SURF's group on LinkedIn, search for "Sustainable Remediation Forum" and look for the SURF logo.**

**To make a news post on SURF's website, contact Jake Torrens at [jtorrens@haleyaldrich.com](mailto:jtorrens@haleyaldrich.com).**

## SGMA and Water Available for Replenishment

Rich Juricich [Principal Water Resources Engineer, California Department of Water Resources (DWR)], described his organization's efforts to ensure successful implementation of SGMA. The DWR is identifying priority and critically overdrafted groundwater basins, developing accompanying regulations for GSA and GSP development, and transferring technical information through best management practices. In January 2017, the DWR issued the draft Water Available for Replenishment (WAFR) to help GSAs identify surface water supplies used or available for use via groundwater recharge or in-lieu of groundwater pumping. The DWR used the Water Evaluation And Planning (WEAP) system and Gage Data Analysis to quantify WAFR estimates to understand the relationship between water supply and water use and develop instream flow requirements for the proposed project-specific capacity. The estimates indicate a potential range of opportunities, investments, and innovations that may provide a foundation or starting point for local planning. In addition, Rich indicated that stakeholders in some low and very low priority groundwater basins were voluntarily formulating GSAs.

# Join us at the Sustainable Remediation Forum

Join SURF or Renew your Membership TODAY!

SURF provides great value to our members, the public, and the practice of remediation. We do this by supporting:

- Alignment with organizational sustainability goals
- Environmental footprint reduction
- Social responsibility and public outreach
- Reduced remediation costs and long-term liabilities
- Innovative thinking, research, and real world application
- Peer benchmarking (domestic and international)
- Access to leading-edge case studies
- Opportunities to collaborate on publications
- Networking and access to subject matter experts
- Academic outreach and mentoring

By joining SURF, you establish partnerships and build relationships with a wide variety of remediation stakeholders: industry and agency peers, customers, clients, academia, technology vendors, and the public. Our website, meetings, and communications provide a clearinghouse and source for the latest information about policy, case studies, best practices, and educational opportunities.

As a member, you have the opportunity to participate in SURF's Technical Initiatives. SURF has published several groundbreaking guidance documents, and recent or current initiatives include examining more sustainable practices for water use and reuse, compiling sustainable remediation case studies, assessing the social aspects of sustainable remediation, and exploring the viability of a sustainable remediation site rating and professional certification system.

SURF has several membership levels based on an individual's qualifications: Regular Member (dues are \$150 annually for new members and \$140 for renewing members), Government Member (dues are \$50 annually), and Student Member (dues are \$25 annually).

The term for all classes of Members is February 1 through January 31 of the following year.

Learn more and apply for membership at [www.sustainableremediation.org/membership/](http://www.sustainableremediation.org/membership/).

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## Sponsorship

Sponsorship is a great way to demonstrate to your communities, clients, employees, or shareholders that you are committed to advancing the science and application of sustainable remediation.

As an appreciation for sponsorship:

- Your company or organization will receive complimentary SURF memberships and meeting registrations
- Your company's or organization's name will be displayed on the SURF website and hyperlinked to your webpage
- Your company's or organization's name will be displayed in the SURF newsletter and announced during SURF events
- Your company or organization may use the SURF Sponsor logo

To inquire about sponsorship options, contact:  
[president@sustainableremediation.org](mailto:president@sustainableremediation.org).

**Find us online:**

[www.sustainableremediation.org](http://www.sustainableremediation.org)