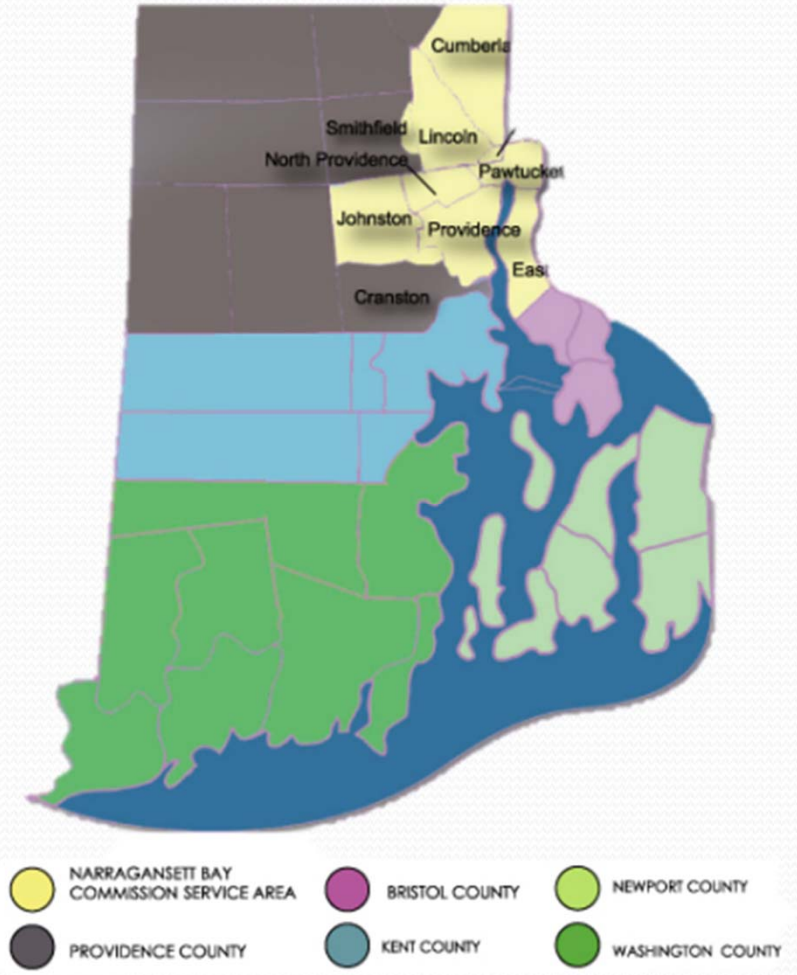
RIWARN: Overview, Evolution & Future Goals

NEWEA Annual Conference
January 28, 2013
Boston, MA

Dave Aucoin – RIWARN Chair
Narragansett Bay Commission

Narragansett Bay Commission

- NBC is a quasi-public agency which oversees the two largest WWTFs in Rhode Island
  - Bucklin Point in East Providence
  - Field's Point in Providence
- Service area: 10 municipalities
- 360,000 people served including 8,000 businesses & industrial customers.



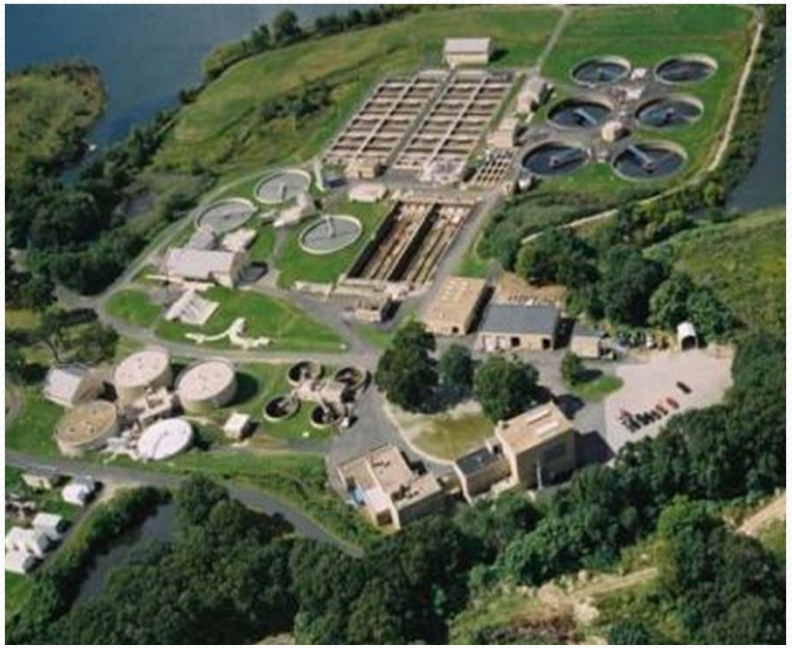
Field's Point WWTF

- Avg. dry weather flow of 45.5 MGD
- Hypochlorite for Disinfection
- 65 MG CSO Tunnel – 2008
- Mixed of industrial, medical, food service & residential input



Bucklin Point WWTF

- Avg. dry weather flow of 23.9 MGD
- UV for Disinfection
- Mixed of industrial, medical, food service & residential inputs



Agenda

- Overview:
  - What is a WARN?
  - History of WARN Initiative
  - Importance of WARNs
  - Membership benefits
  - Logistics
- Evolution of RIWARN
- National Status & Future Goals



What is a "WARN?"

Water/Wastewater Agency Response Network

- ✓ A network of utilities helping utilities during natural or man-made emergencies
- ✓ A mutual aid & assistance agreement among public & private utilities
- ✓ Lending of personnel & equipment to prepare for, respond to, and/or recover from an emergency
- ✓ Participation is voluntary

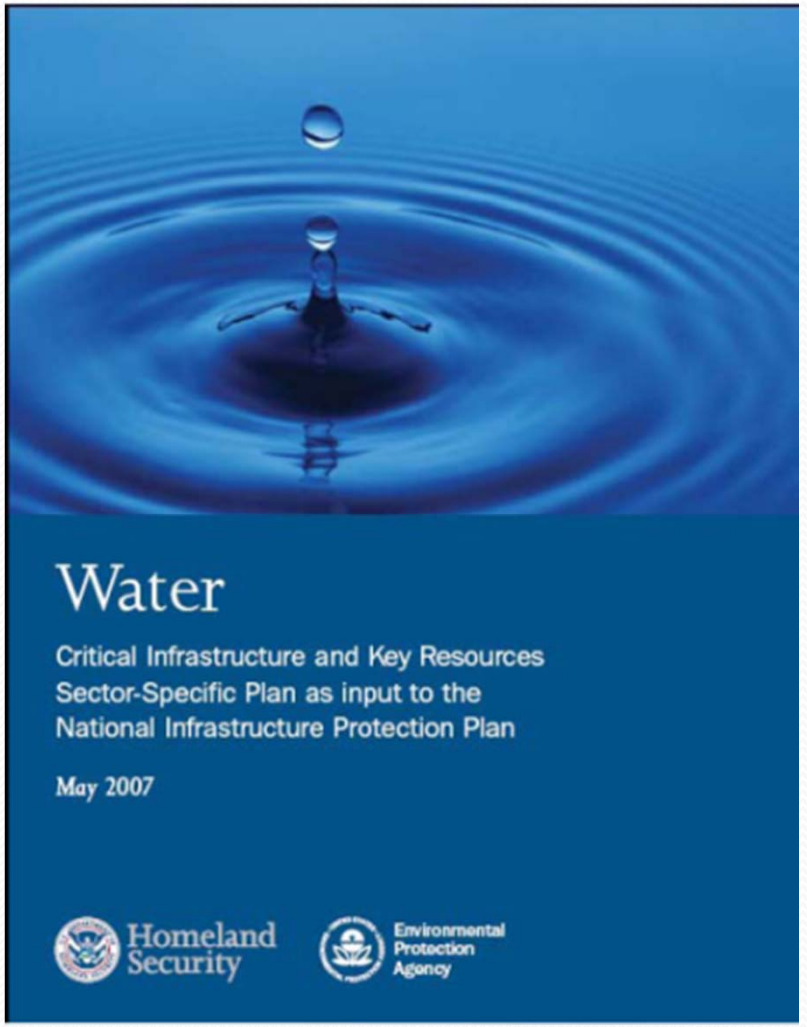


Who's Involved?

- Utility owner/operators
- Professional association representation
  - (EPA, WEF, AWWA, etc.)
- State water and wastewater primacy agency
  - (State health, environmental management, etc.)
- State emergency management and/or homeland security agency (State EMAC coordinator)
- US EPA region representation

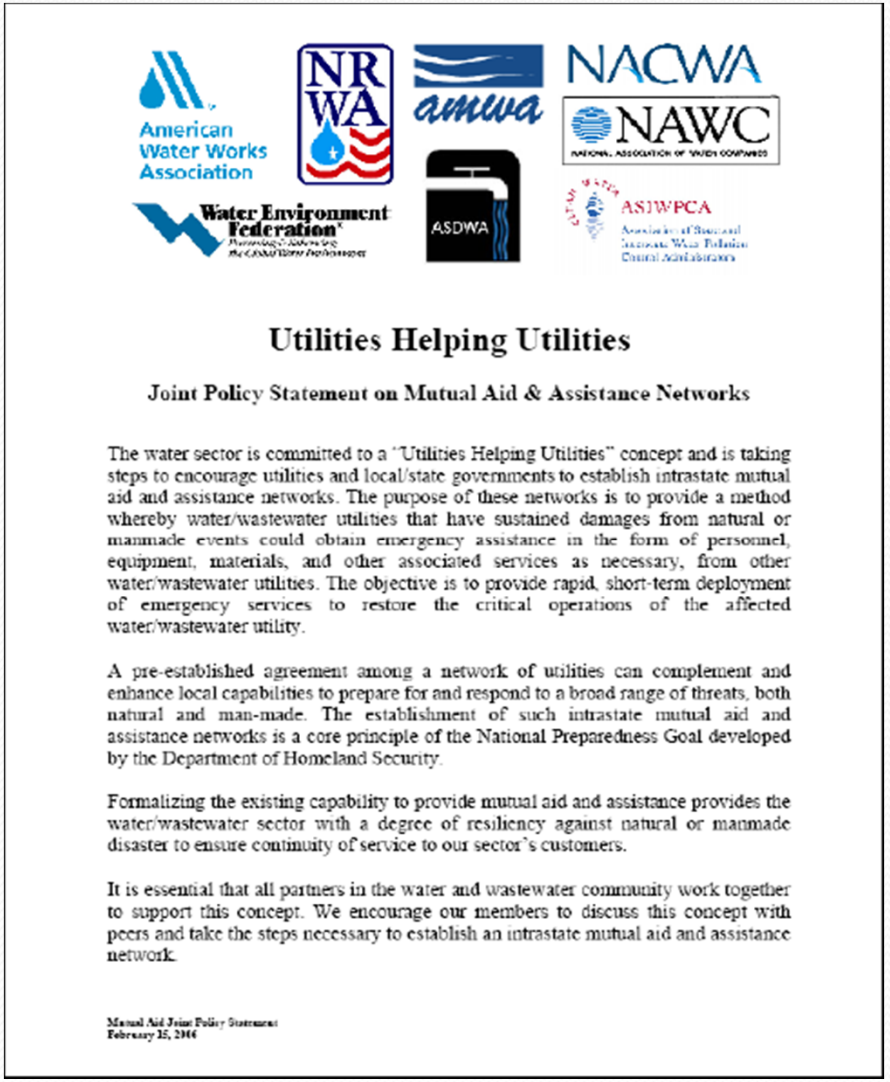
Threat Assessment

- National Infrastructure Preparedness Plan (NIPP)
  - Taking an "all hazards" approach to risk management
  - Sector resiliency is a common thread
  - Identified 17 CI/KR sectors – water/wastewater sector
  - Primary goal is to maintain a resilient infrastructure by exploring and expanding the implementation of mutual aid agreements in the water sector.



Utilities Helping Utilities – Joint Policy Document (2006)

- 8 major water organizations
- Goal: encourage the creation of intrastate mutual aid & assistance networks
- Provides for greater water sector resiliency against natural or manmade incidents
- WEF – One of the organizations that became committed to the "Utilities Helping Utilities" concept and continues to encourage its members to discuss mutual aid and assistance with their peers



Utilities Helping Utilities

Joint Policy Statement on Mutual Aid & Assistance Networks

The water sector is committed to a "Utilities Helping Utilities" concept and is taking steps to encourage utilities and local/state governments to establish intrastate mutual aid and assistance networks. The purpose of these networks is to provide a method whereby water/wastewater utilities that have sustained damages from natural or manmade events could obtain emergency assistance in the form of personnel, equipment, materials, and other associated services as necessary, from other water/wastewater utilities. The objective is to provide rapid, short-term deployment of emergency services to restore the critical operations of the affected water/wastewater utility.

A pre-established agreement among a network of utilities can complement and enhance local capabilities to prepare for and respond to a broad range of threats, both natural and man-made. The establishment of such intrastate mutual aid and assistance networks is a core principle of the National Preparedness Goal developed by the Department of Homeland Security.

Formalizing the existing capability to provide mutual aid and assistance provides the water/wastewater sector with a degree of resiliency against natural or manmade disaster to ensure continuity of service to our sector's customers.

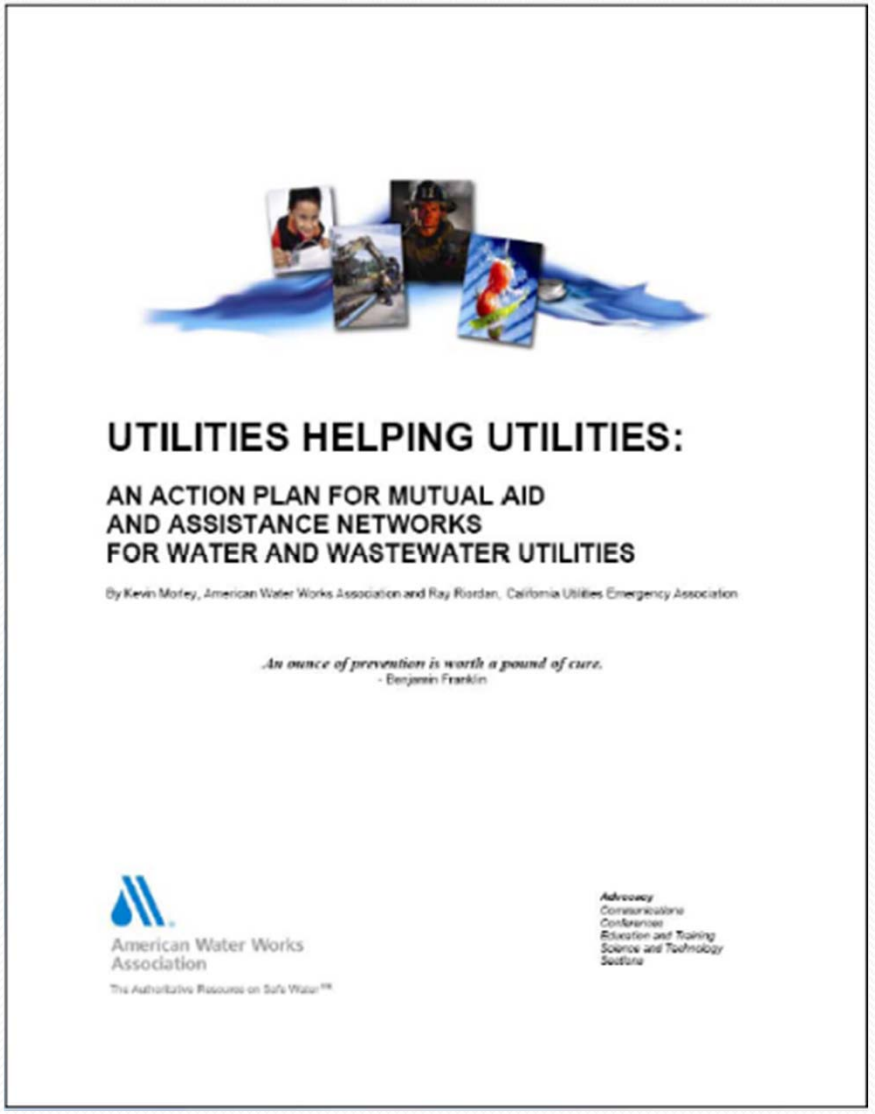
It is essential that all partners in the water and wastewater community work together to support this concept. We encourage our members to discuss this concept with peers and take the steps necessary to establish an intrastate mutual aid and assistance network.

Mutual Aid Joint Policy Statement
February 15, 2006

The WARN Action Plan

Utilities Helping Utilities

- Outlines 10 key steps in the formation of a WARN
- Includes sample agreement that satisfies NIMS and comparative assessment of existing WARN programs
- Recognized by DHS as model

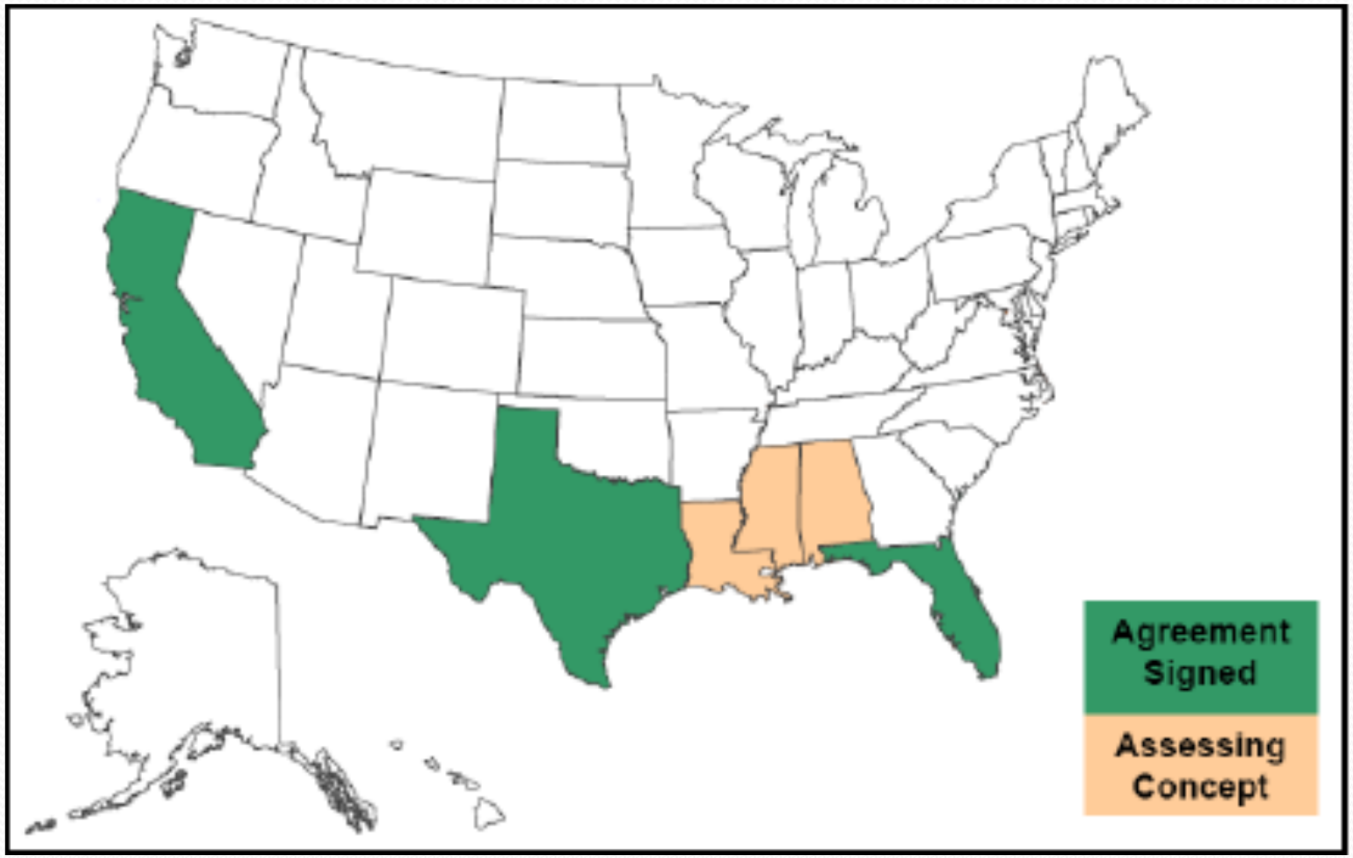


10 Steps to Develop a WARN

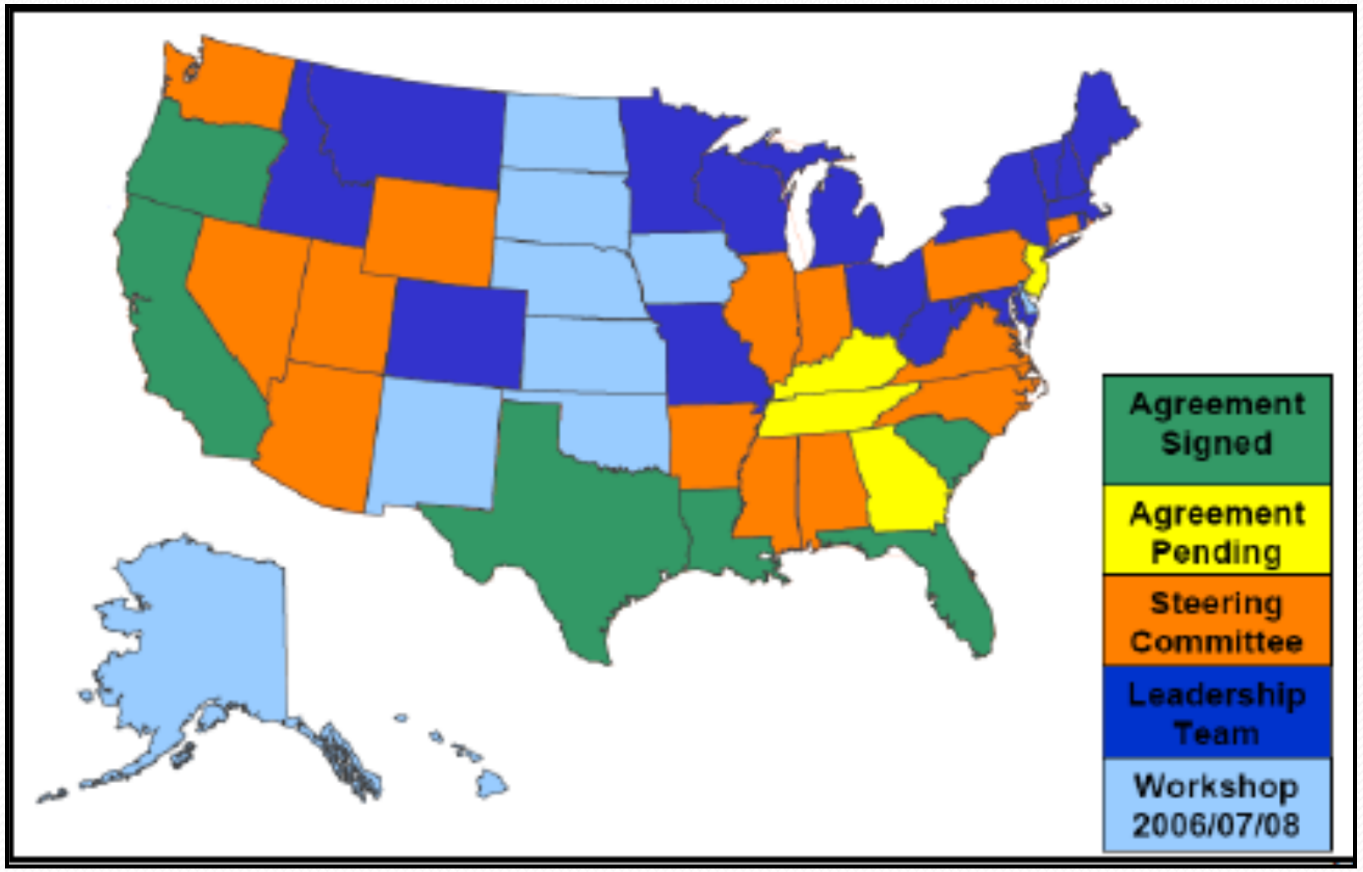
1. Identify interest in starting a program
2. Form an Initial Leadership Team
3. Prepare a kickoff session
4. Establish a Steering Committee
5. Identify a mission for the program and goals for the Steering Committee
6. Review use of state regions
7. Identify mutual aid and assistance activation criteria
8. Draft an agreement
9. Create facilitation tools
10. Maintain the program



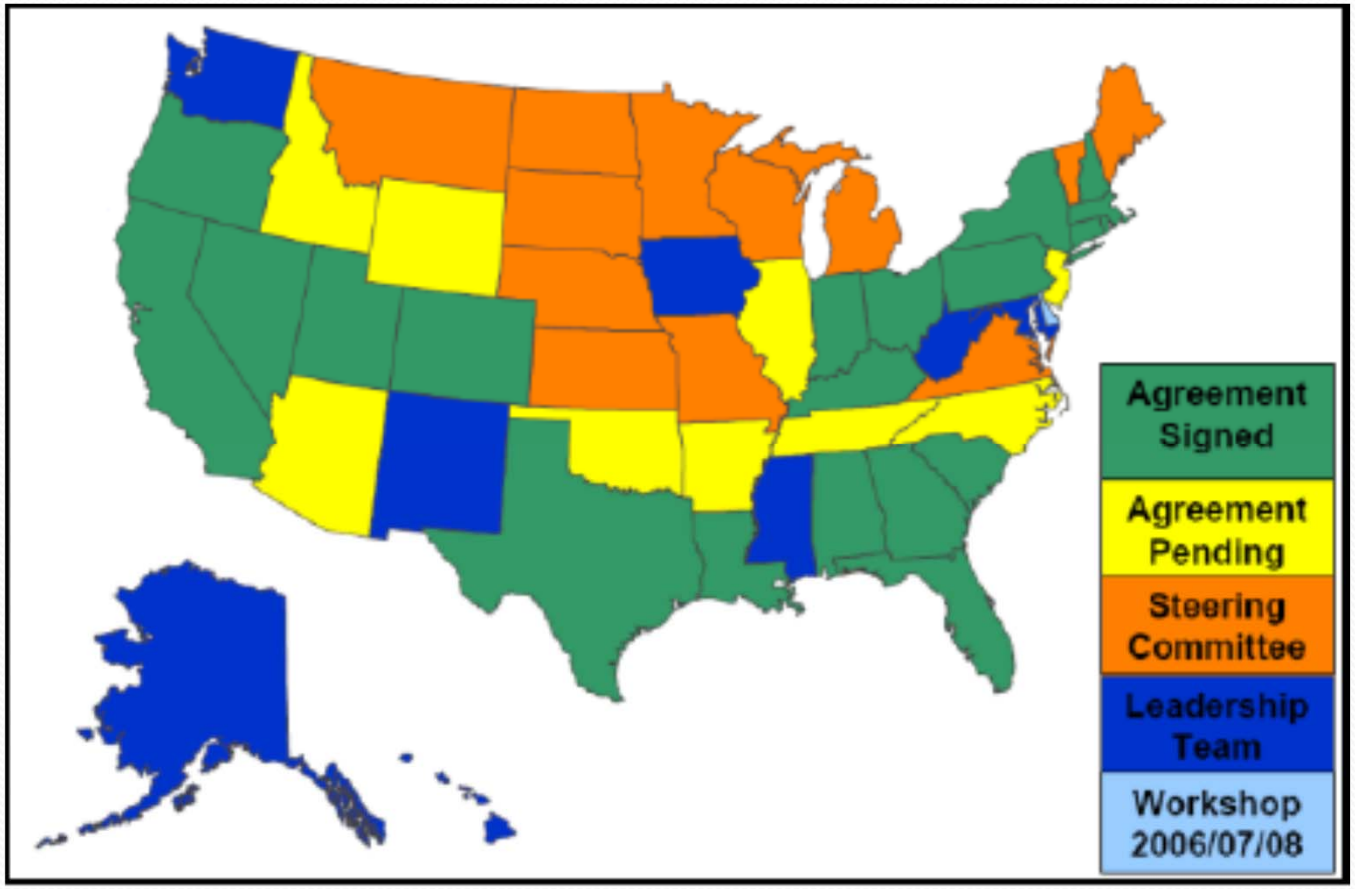
April 2006 (3 states)



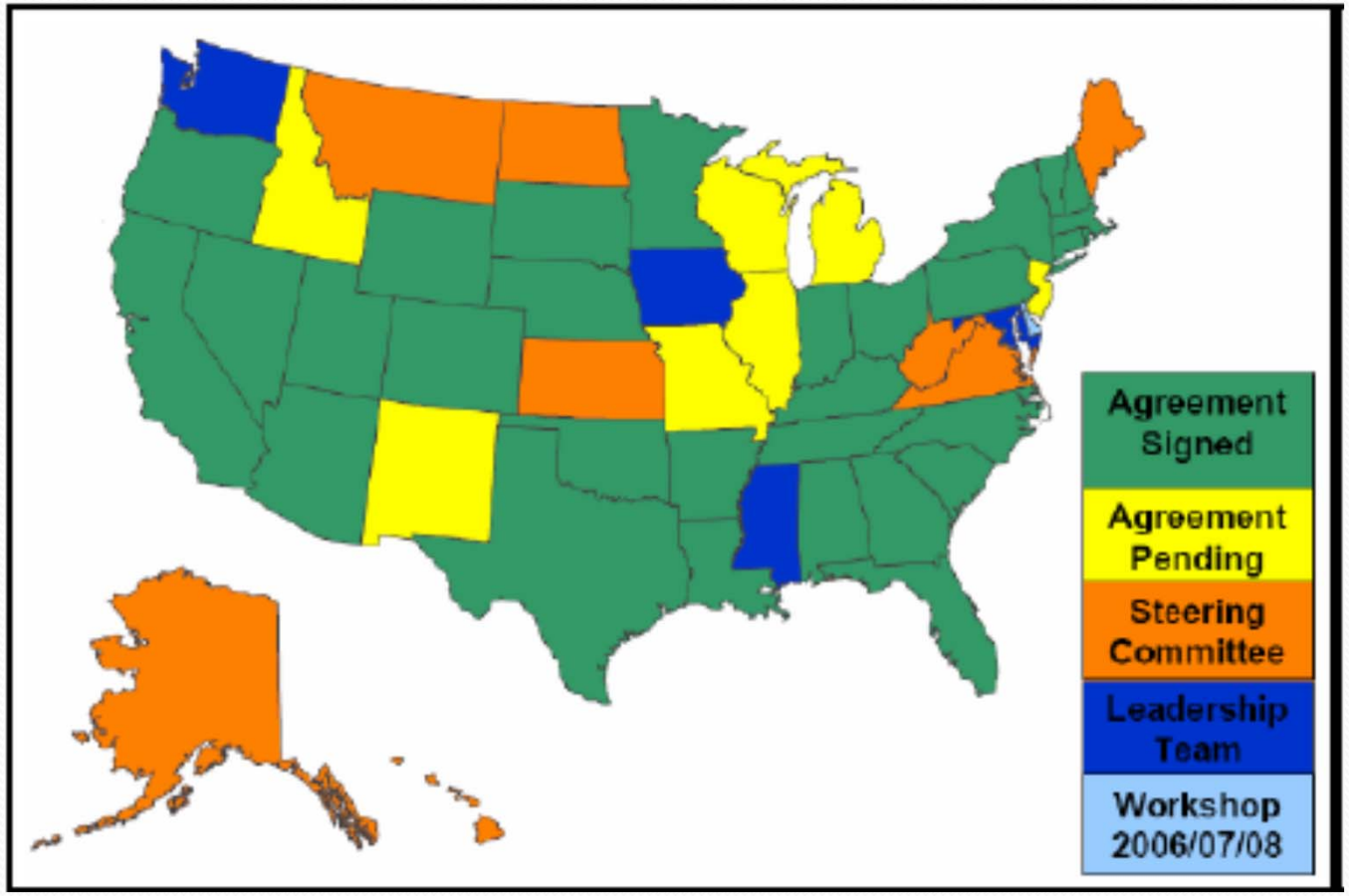
May 2007 (6 states)



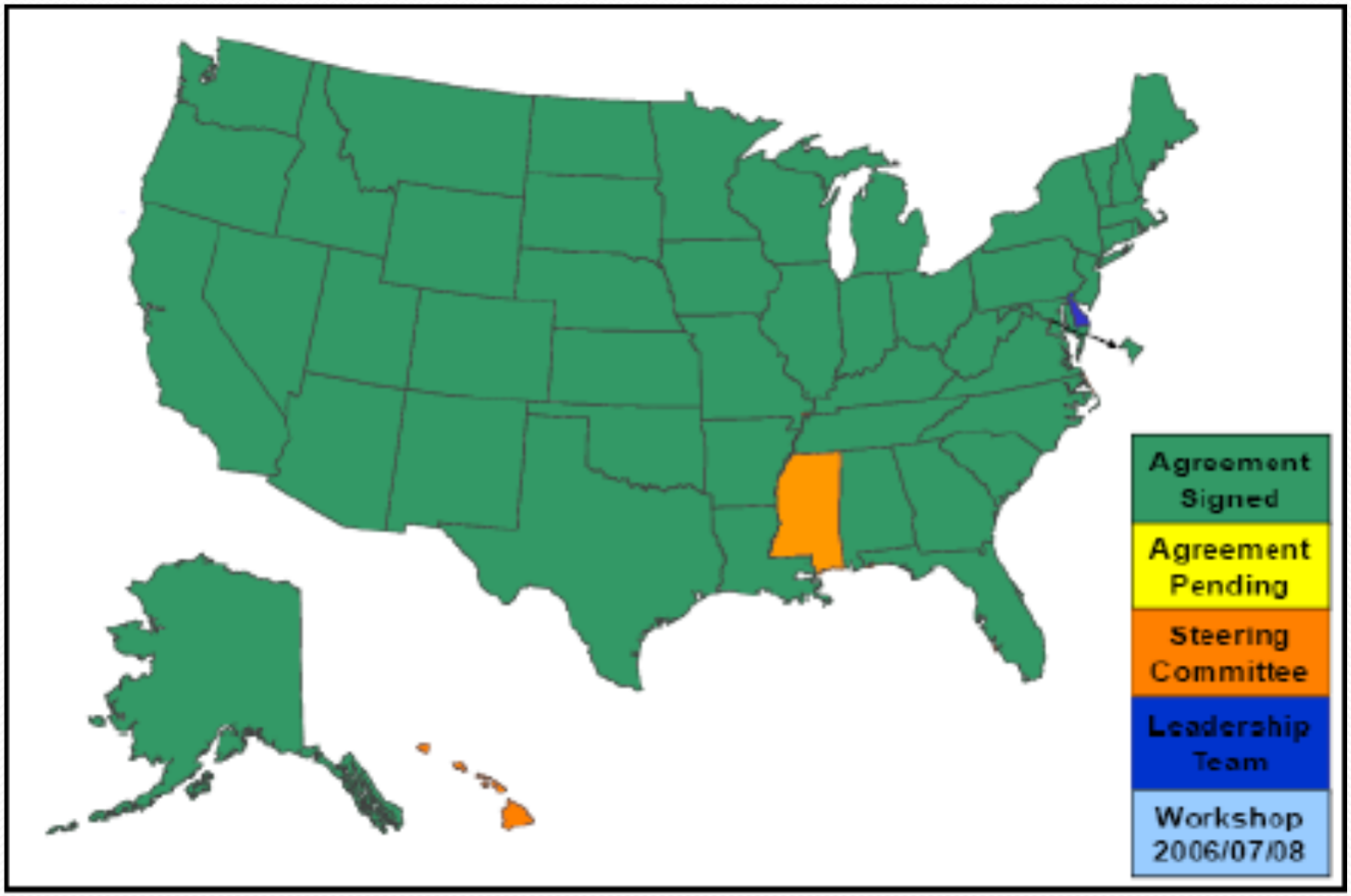
January 2008 (20 states)



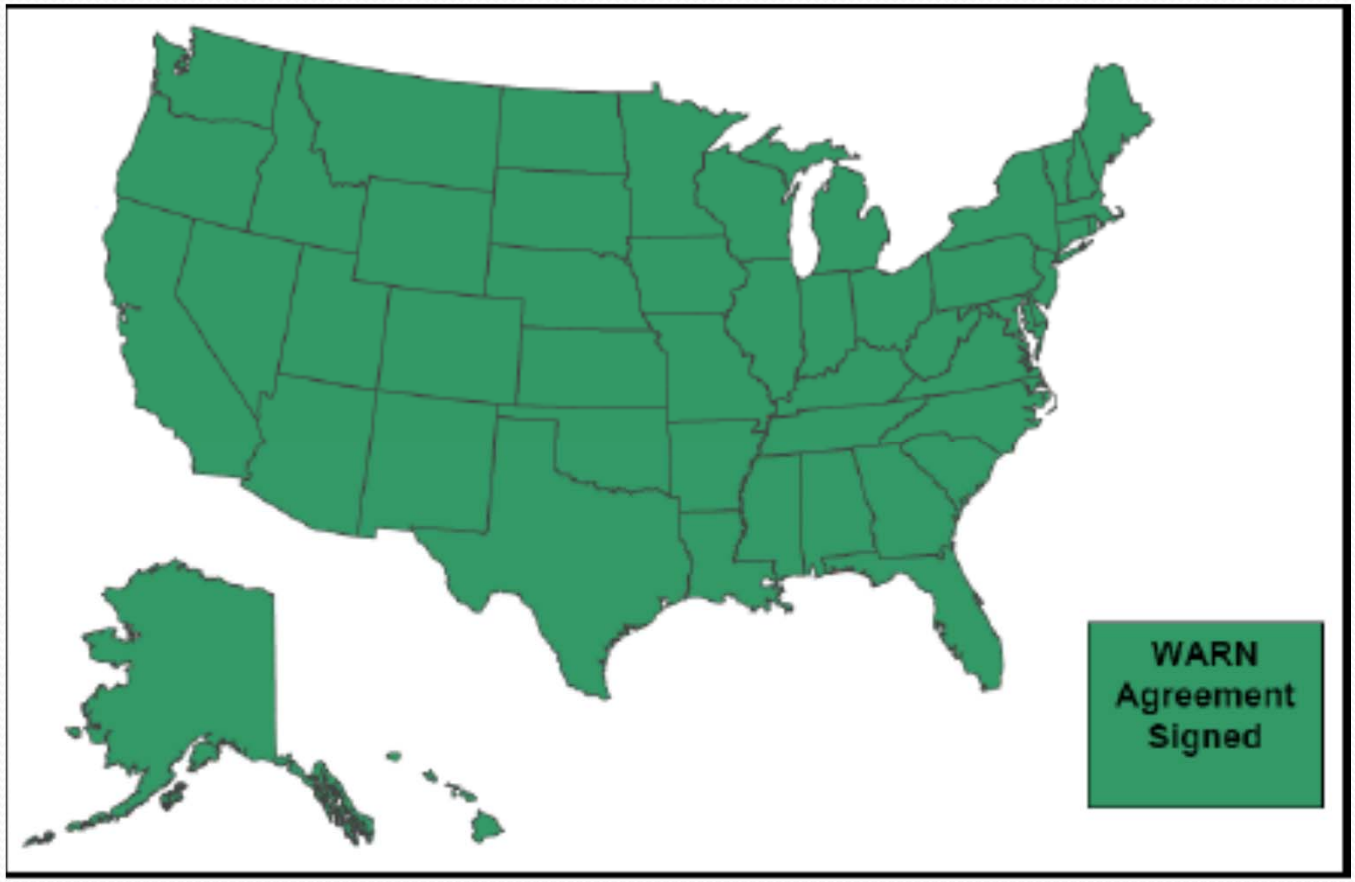
October 2008 (31 states)



July 2012 (48 states)



The “WARN Ultimatum”



Importance of a WARN



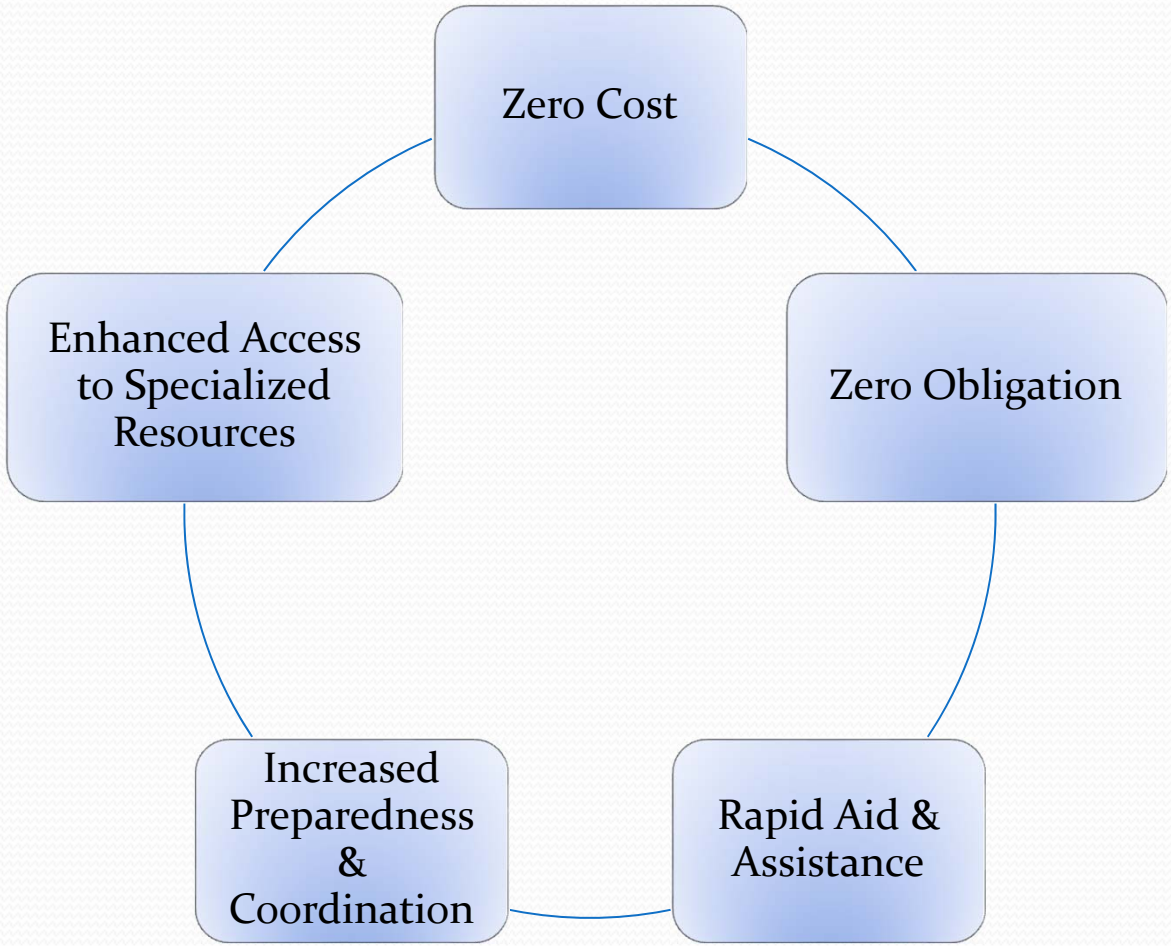
Establishes an agreement and protocols to access specialized resources such as knowledgeable water and wastewater utility personnel or utility specific heavy equipment

Provides a forum for establishing and maintaining emergency contacts

A WARN can facilitate utility training

Helps fill the need for personnel and resources BEFORE the arrival of government aid

Benefits of Joining WARN

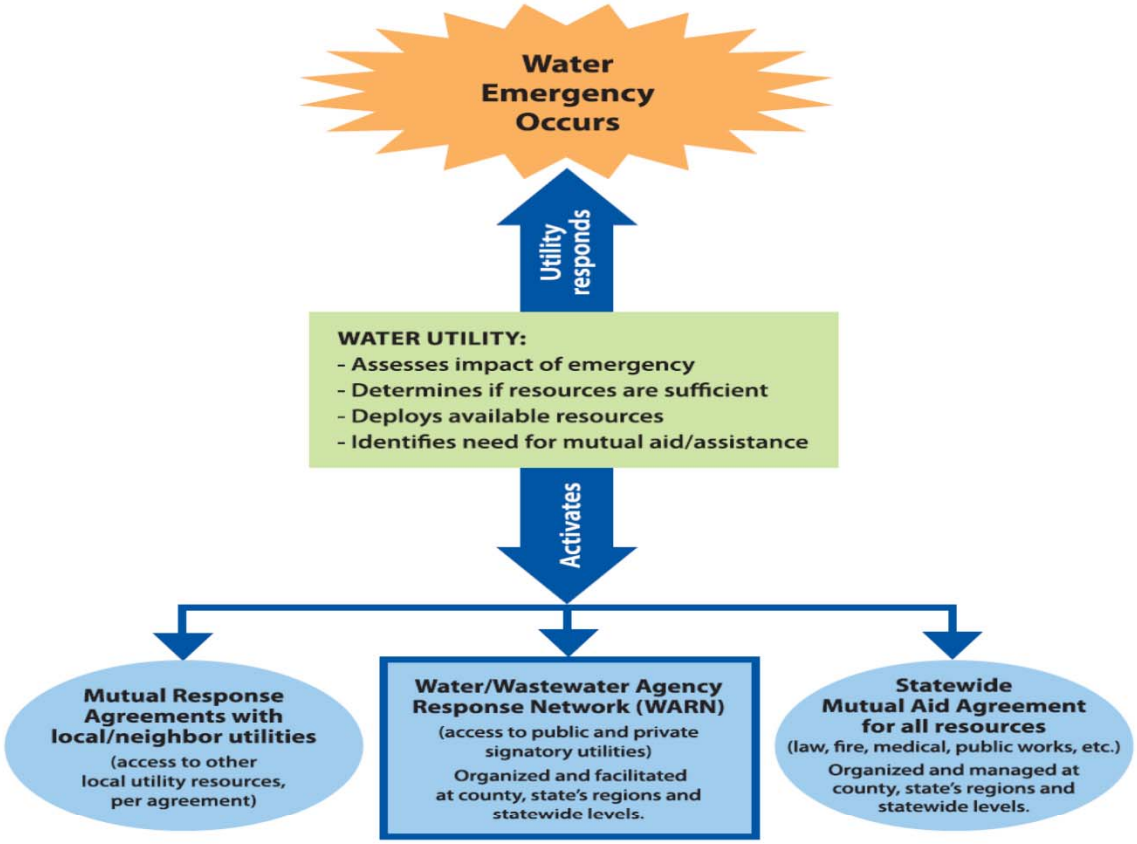


How Does it Work?

- Requesting Member
  - Provides communication, food & shelter
- Responding Member
  - Provides equipment and supervisory personnel
- Reimbursement rates – FEMA schedule
- Payment
  - Responding member sends bill within 90 days
  - Requesting member pays bill within 45 days
- Records – 3 years.

Mutual Aid and Assistance in the Water Sector

WARN is one of three possible mutual aid/assistance mechanisms

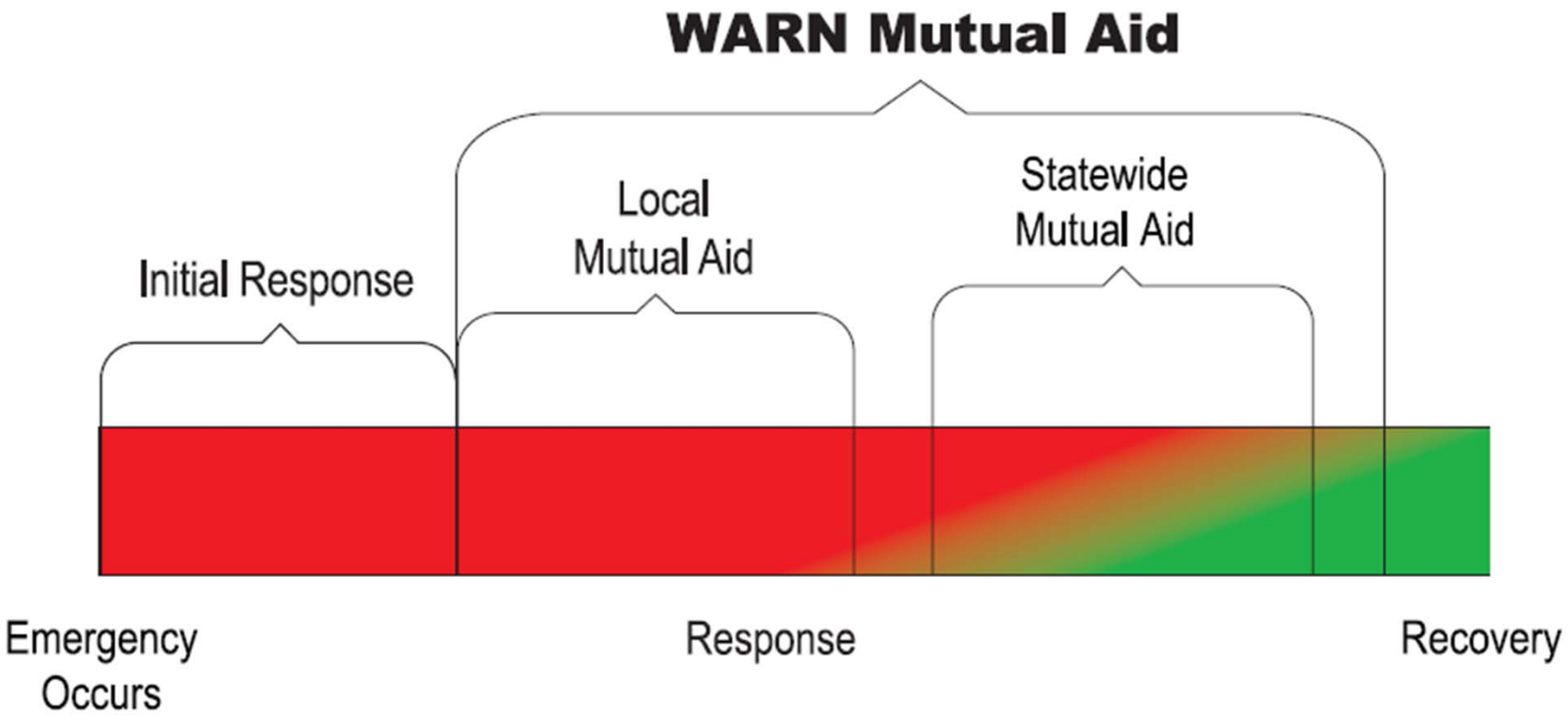


WARN does not require a declaration and includes both public and private utilities.

Mutual Aid and Assistance Alternatives

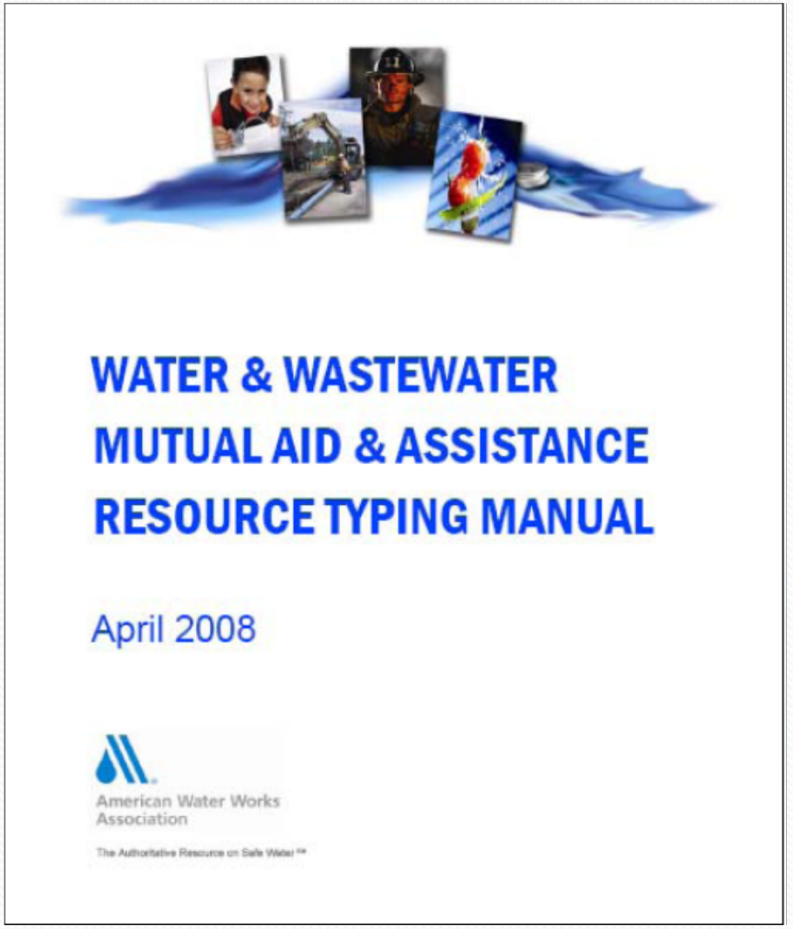
During an emergency, a utility needs to determine the best alternatives to address its response needs. Alternatives could include three possible mutual aid or assistance mechanisms: contacting neighboring utilities with whom they have pre-written and established agreements; using public agency statewide mutual aid and assistance programs; or accessing the water/wastewater mutual aid and assistance program formally known as WARN.

Emergency Timeline and Mutual Aid



Resource Typing

- ✓ Common terminology approach to emergency response
- ✓ Specific for the water & wastewater sector
- ✓ Common terminology used for emergency situations, personnel and equipment reimbursement



RI WARN - Timeline

- **2007**
  - Rhode Island became the second WARN State in New England

- **2008**
  - Narragansett Bay Commission received EPA Environmental Merit Award for dedication to the WARN initiative
  - Launched the www.riwarn.org website, funded by RI DOH and modeled after TX WARN

RI WARN – Timeline, cont.

- 2008
  - EPA-funded ½ day Tabletop Exercise (New England Mutual Aid – Flood Scenario)
- 2009
  - EPA-funded ½ day Tabletop Exercise (New England Mutual Aid – Earthquake Scenario)
- 2011
  - EPA-funded ½ day training on Water Sector Incident Command System (ICS) and National Incident Management System (NIMS)

EPA United States Environmental Protection Agency New England

Environmental MERIT AWARDS 2008

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
New England Region

Environmental Merit Award
presented to

NARRAGANSETT BAY COMMISSION

in gratitude and appreciation for your exemplary leadership
and tireless efforts on behalf of New England's environment

April 2008



Status of RIWARN

- Active Steering Committee
- Operational Plan
- New Website
- 21 Member Utilities
  - 13 Water
  - 4 Wastewater
- Associate Member Agencies
  - RI DEM
  - RI EMA
  - RI Department of Health
  - ASRWWA



Future Goals for RIWARN

- Develop online inventory of resources
- Increase membership
- Work with EPA and AWWA to help develop a New England Interstate WARN Agreement
- Train more utility members on basic ICS

Summary

- All emergencies are local and require a local response capability.
- Participation in a WARN agreement will enhance your utility's preparedness and overall resiliency against **any** disaster.
- In a basic sense, WARN 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.

