



## Program Fact Sheet Watershed Planning

Section 729 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended

**Authority and Scope:** Section 729 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended, authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to assess the water resource needs of river basins and watersheds of the United States including needs relating to:

- ecosystem protection and restoration
- navigation and ports
- flood risk management
- watershed protection
- water supply and;
- drought preparedness.

**Project Phases and Funding:** Section 729 projects start with an initial watershed assessment (reconnaissance phase) which is funded 100% federally and limited to \$100,000 per project. After approval of the initial watershed assessment, the project enters the watershed study phase. The watershed study phase will lead to the development of a watershed plan that recommends tools and a strategic course of action for achieving the desired conditions in the watershed. Costs associated with this phase are shared 75% Federal and 25% non-Federal, with the non-Federal sponsor given credit for services in-kind and some other costs.

**Non-Federal Responsibilities:** Formal assurance of local cooperation must be furnished by a local sponsoring agency. The local sponsor must be a public agency or a non-profit environmental organization. The sponsoring agency must normally agree to:

- Provide 25 percent of the watershed study costs.

**How to Request Assistance:** A study of a prospective Section 729 project will be initiated after receipt of a written request (see sample below), from an authorized sponsoring agency (see non-Federal Responsibilities above), and provided Federal funds are available.

### For Further Information, Contact:

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Planning Branch  
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716-879-4145

**SAMPLE LETTER OF REQUEST  
FOR A  
SECTION 729 STUDY**

Lieutenant Colonel Owen Beaudoin  
District Commander  
U.S. Army Engineer District, Buffalo  
1776 Niagara Street  
Buffalo, NY 14207

ATTN: Planning Branch

Dear LTC Beaudoin:

In accordance with the provisions of Section 729 of the Water Resources Development Act of 1986, as amended, the (state, city, county, town, non-profit organization) is requesting Corps of Engineers assistance in addressing water resource needs within the (name of watershed/river basin).

We are fully aware of the following non-Federal requirements associated with projects under the Section 729 authority.

Initial Watershed Assessment: Funded 100% by the Federal government.

Watershed Plan: Funded 75% by the Federal government and 25% by a non-Federal sponsor. The non-Federal share may be funded with cash or work in-kind. This is a study-only authority which does not authorize construction.

We are aware that this letter serves as an expression of non-Federal intent to cooperate on this project and is not a contract obligation. Either party may discontinue this effort at any point.

- Add any additional information or discussion desired.\*

Signed by a Director, Mayor, Town Manager,  
or his/her representative