SDWARN-Utilities Helping Utilities Fact Sheet

1. **What is Mutual Aid/Assistance?**
   - Mutual Aid/Assistance is one utility helping another based on a written agreement
   - The assistance is provided across jurisdictional boundaries in the event of an emergency

2. **What is a WARN?**
   - A Water and Wastewater Agency Response Network (WARN) is a network of utilities helping utilities to respond to and recover from emergencies
   - Participation is voluntary
   - There is no obligation to respond
   - There is no cost to participate

3. **What is the purpose of a WARN?**
   - A WARN establishes an agreement and protocols for sharing resources among water and wastewater utilities statewide
   - A WARN provides a forum for establishing and maintaining emergency contacts
   - A WARN provides access to specialized resources needed to respond to emergencies that disrupt water and/or wastewater systems
   - A WARN can facilitate training that specifically focuses on the exchange of resources during an emergency or drill

4. **Why is a WARN important?**
   - Utility resources are specialized
   - Utilities must be self-sufficient
   - Utilities must fill the gap before the arrival of government aid

5. **What does a WARN program provide a utility?**
   - Access to specialized, certified, and knowledgeable utility personnel
   - Access to heavy equipment, tools and supplies used by utilities during normal events

6. **What are the benefits of a WARN?**
   - There is no cost to participate
   - WARN is like investing in a no cost insurance policy to access resources when needed
   - WARN increases emergency preparedness and coordination
   - WARN enhances access to specialized resources
   - WARN provides a single agreement to access resources statewide
   - WARN expedites arrival of aid (don't have to work out the administrative items; the agreements and WARN protocols work them out in advance for you)
   - WARN agreement contains indemnification and worker's compensation provisions to protect participating utilities and provide reimbursement protocols

7. **How does a utility get assistance during an emergency?**
   - Currently, SDWARN is creating a website through which access may be made
   - Initial access may be made directly to other members or through the website
   - As a result of the contact, WARN members are able to match the equipment, skilled labor, and other resources needed with resources other members have available by querying a database, calling members, or using an internet message board to locate those resources
   - Each WARN also provides facilitation in collecting damage assessment and locating resources as needed
   - Public utilities may also access other resources through local, state, and federal agencies

8. **Are member utilities required to respond and send resources?**
   - There is no obligation to respond

9. **What happens if a utility sends resources and needs them back?**
   - Under no circumstances is a utility to send resources if it impacts their ability to manage daily operations or response to its own emergency
   - It is up to the lending utility to determine what resources to send
   - Resources remain under the authority of the sending utility, and as such can be recalled any time

10. **What happens if equipment on loan is damaged or stolen?**
   - This is defined in our mutual aid agreement; the lending utility is typically responsible to have insurance in case this happens

11. **Are mutual aid and assistance activities eligible for FEMA reimbursement?**
   - It is important to understand how the FEMA programs work and understand how they apply to mutual aid/assistance in advance; Some key considerations for FEMA reimbursement include:
     - The assistance is requested by the Applicant
     - The work performed is directly related to the disaster and is otherwise eligible for FEMA assistance
     - The entity can provide documentation of rates and payment for services, if requested
     - The agreement is written and was in effect **prior** to the disaster

12. **Will a utility be reimbursed for the use of their resources?**
   - This is defined in the mutual aid agreement
   - In some cases during a federally declared disaster, FEMA may provide reimbursement for equipment, fuel, and personnel used in a disaster

13. **How is WARN different from a statewide mutual aid program?**
   - Statewide mutual aid/assistance agreements (MAA) frequently require a declaration of a "local emergency" to activate the agreement, WARN agreements do not require the declaration of an emergency, saving critical time in response
   - Statewide MAA programs do not typically include private utilities, WARN agreements do
   - For aid to cross state lines coordination with state emergency management is recommend and is typically facilitated by Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) in coordination with the National Response Plan

14. **Is help available for disasters other than hurricanes?**
   - WARN is available in all types of emergencies
   - WARN members can receive assistance anytime their system needs emergency assistance

15. **What about setting up an interstate mutual aid program?**
   - Currently the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) is being used by all fifty states to share aid across state lines. The water sector will be working with the administrators of EMAC to ensure that it can be used effectively for the water sector.