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New York State Announces \$50 Million in Grants Available for Local Drinking Water and Wastewater Improvements

Recently Enacted State Budget Provides \$200 Million Over Three Years for Critical Drinking Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Upgrades

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) and the New York State Department of Health (DOH) today announced that \$50 million in water infrastructure grants is now available for local governments for critical water and wastewater infrastructure upgrades.

“Strengthening the infrastructure of our water systems is vital for protecting the long-term health and sustainability of communities across the state,” said Sabrina M. Ty, EFC President and CEO. “With these grants, we are adding to the billions of dollars in interest-free loans New York State has provided to help localities move forward with these projects, create jobs, and protect the environment.”

“Ensuring the delivery of safe drinking water is an essential step in building healthier communities,” said New York State Health Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. “The overwhelming majority of people in New York State receive their drinking water through a public water supply system. These grants will enable localities to make necessary upgrades to their water infrastructure to guarantee that future generations have the same clean drinking water we have today.”

The Water Infrastructure Improvement Act provides \$200 million in grant funding over three fiscal years, with \$50 million in the first year and \$75 million each year for the last two years. This year, \$30 million will be available for wastewater infrastructure projects and \$20 million will be available for drinking water projects, which will be administered by the state Environmental Facilities Corporation, the state Department of Environmental Conservation and the state Department of Health.

Wastewater Infrastructure Projects

As required by the statute, the Environmental Facilities Corporation will give priority to projects that meet economic hardship and environmental health criteria. Priority will also be given to wastewater projects that mitigate combined sewer and storm sewer overflows, as well as for projects that increase system resiliency to protect wastewater collection and treatment systems from sea level rise and damage from extreme weather.

Applicants seeking grant funding for wastewater projects are eligible to receive grants of either 25 percent of eligible project costs or \$5 million, whichever is less.

“Along with interest-free and low-interest loans, these new grants will make it more affordable than ever for communities to improve their clean-water infrastructure,” said EFC President and CEO Sabrina M. Ty. “Wastewater infrastructure not only protects the environment and promotes public health, it also supports the creation of new jobs and new economic development opportunities.”

“Clean water infrastructure is an investment in the future,” said Joe Martens, commissioner of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation. “These funds will help maintain and improve water quality throughout New York. I want to thank Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature for building a better New York by providing these critically important clean water funds.”

Drinking Water Infrastructure Projects

Drinking water projects that provide the greatest reduction in risk to public health will be eligible for grants. Preference will be given to hardship communities with 75 percent of the drinking water funds being reserved for them. Each project or community may receive grants of up to 60 percent of a project's eligible costs, with a \$2 million limit.

Applications for both wastewater and drinking water projects are now available and due by September 4, 2015. More information on the grant program and applications is available at www.efc.ny.gov/NYSwatergrants. Municipalities with questions should call the Environmental Facilities Corporation at 518-402-6924.

In addition to the grants announced today, EFC and DOH offer zero-percent and low-interest financing to communities to further reduce the cost of infrastructure projects. More information on these loans is available at: www.efc.ny.gov/CWSRF (for wastewater projects) and www.efc.ny.gov/DWSRF (for drinking water projects).

New York State leads the nation with the largest annual investment in water-quality infrastructure of any state. Since 2011, New York State has financed more than \$6.7 billion in critical water and wastewater infrastructure investments – the largest four-year investment since the inception of the revolving loan funds in 1987. The state revolving loan funds are administered by the New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation, on behalf of the Department of Environmental Conservation, and jointly with the New York State Department of Health.

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