



DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below:

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded wholly or in part through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Cozad Water Meter Replacements, Water Main Replacement and Extensions
COUNTY: Dawson
POPULATION: 3,977 (2010 census)
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311665
ESTIMATED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$ 1,327,217
ESTIMATED DWSRF 15% LOAN FORGIVENESS: \$ 234,215
ESTIMATED DWSRF PROJECT COST TOTAL: \$ 1,561,432

The City of Cozad, Nebraska, is planning to upgrade existing water meters to automated meter readers to better account for usage and customer billing. The city's water staff intends to do the actual installation of meters. The majority of the meters will be installed in existing exterior meter pits, with some locations receiving new exterior meter pits. The city also intends to replace, loop and extend existing water mains to provide better service to their customers and water to areas in the city limits. The city has applied for financial assistance through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) to finance the projects. The water main projects are as follows:

1. Papio Lane from 19th to 22nd Street
2. Meridian Avenue from 19th to 24th Street.
3. 4th Street from Willow to D Street.

The project will have a positive impact on the environment and supply city water to residents on private wells. The meters will provide better efficiency for the city staff giving them radio read capability. The residential meters are estimated at \$300 apiece to replace with the larger commercial meters at \$600 average.

The water projects are eligible for financing through the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF) and are listed on the SFY2021 Intended Use Plan. The DWSRF could provide financing for eligible costs through a loan with repayment terms up to 30 years with an annual interest rate of 0.0

percent and an annual administrative fee of 0.0 percent. Cozad is eligible for 15 percent DWSRF loan forgiveness, dependent on availability of funds.

Cozad's water rate would be pledged to repay the DWSRF loan. Currently, Cozad's residential water rate is \$17.90 base, plus \$0.90 per thousand gallons usage, which, for a typical 5,000 gallon monthly estimated usage, would total an average monthly charge of \$22.40 per connection. The City of Cozad has approximately 1,810 water service connections. A water rate increase of \$2.24 per month is projected to be sufficient to pay the proposed DWSRF debt service and the 10% debt service coverage.

The city has a permit to operate a public water system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179. The proposed project is determined by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by the DHHS on June 12, 2018, wherein no deficiencies were noted. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. Cozad will still be required to undergo an initial and, if necessary, a final TFM Assessment by the DHHS to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Also, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, well below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

No portion of the proposed project is found in the 100 year floodplain of the Platte River, nor any endangered species, prime farmland or historic resources are anticipated. A Construction Storm Water General Permit will be required from the NDEE if more than 1 acre of land will be disturbed. Cozad can designate the general contractor as the authorized representative on the storm water permit notice of intent submitted to the NDEE. Authorization of storm water runoff from the construction activity must be in place prior to commencing construction and the areas disturbed during construction will be re-paved or re-seeded with comparable grasses. The project must comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Eagle Act.

The proposed project was reviewed for eligibility for a categorical exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act review specified in 40 CFR (Code of Federal Regulations) Part 6.204. The project meets all criteria described in the above reference and the Department has determined that this project is eligible for a categorical exclusion. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that a Finding of No Significant Impact will not be prepared. The project as proposed is to serve existing users in previously developed areas. Justification for categorical exclusion includes:

- The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric archeological or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places;
- The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas as wetlands, and floodplains. No prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat will be affected (the project specifications will require compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Eagle Act);
- The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and

distribution of population including altering the character of existing residential areas, or may be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Native American Tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans;

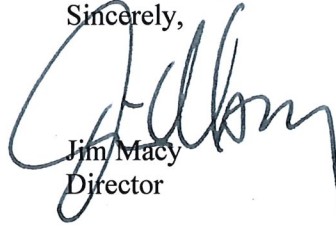
- The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy.

The NDEE shall revoke the categorical exclusion and shall require a full environmental review if, subsequent to the granting of exclusion, the state determines that the proposed project no longer meets the requirements for a categorical exclusion due to changes in the proposed project; or new evidence reveals that serious local or environmental issues exist; or federal, state, local or tribal laws are being violated.

This action is taken on the basis of careful review of the application and other supporting data, which are on file in the office of the NDEE. These are available for public review upon request. Persons having a comment on this categorical exclusion determination are encouraged to submit such comments directly to Tom Fuenning, Review Engineer, of the Technical Assistance Section of NDEE, who can be reached at (402) 471-4989 or email: tom.fuenning@nebraska.gov, or contacting the NDEE Project Manager John Danforth at (402) 471-3373, or by email at john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov.

Signed this 7th day of April, 2021.

Sincerely,



Jim Macy
Director

JM/TSF/tsf

Attachments: Distribution List
Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST
COZAD, NEBRASKA

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ENERGY

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LOCAL NEWSPAPER

Cozad, Tri-City Tribune
320 W. 8th Street
Cozad, NE 69130
(Public Information Only, not for Public Notice)



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SHEET OF 98

COZAD MUNICIPAL PAVING AND UTILITY IMPROVEMENTS	
COZAD, NEBRASKA	2021

NO.	DATE	REVISION DESCRIPTION

PRELIMINARY
NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION
 March 25, 2021
 DATE PLOTTED
OLSSON

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