



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 (NEPA), 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 Environmental Quality (NDEQ) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Highway 75 Water Main Relocations
APPLICANT: Cass County Rural Water District No. 1
COUNTY: Cass
POPULATION: 3,320
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311628
TOTAL LOAN AMOUNT: \$2,077,000

The Cass County Rural Water District No. 1 (RWD) has applied for funding, through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services-Division of Public Health (DHHS) and the NDEQ, to replace or relocate water mains at numerous locations along Highway 75 from Murray to Plattsmouth, required due to a conflict with a Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) project for widening the highway.

According to the Priority Ranking System this project is considered to be a low priority and the system was included on the Planning List in the State Fiscal Year 2018 Intended Use Plan (IUP). The project can be funded in accordance with the IUP's listed bypass criteria, as the bypass date of January 1, 2018 has passed. Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEQ, this project was determined to be eligible for a 20-year loan at an interest rate of 2.0% per the criteria listed in the IUP. In addition to principal and interest, an administrative fee of 1% of the loan balance will be assessed. The current residential water rate is \$31 per month, with an added consumption charge of \$3.30 for every 1000 gallons of water used. The estimated annual DWSRF Debt Service from this project (including 10% coverage) is \$161,777. But that will likely not be the debt impact for this project, as the NDOT will provide a substantial reimbursement amount to cost share the project with the RWD. Based upon the 1,233 active service connections, residential water rates may need to be raised approximately \$2.50 per month to address the new debt service, based

upon a comparable DWSRF funded project in Plattsmouth. Regardless, a final assessment of any potential rate increase would be made by the RWD after the completion of the project.

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 solely the replacement of existing infrastructure. 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, prime farmland, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat;
- Based on a review of the available mapping, a small portion of the project lies within the 100-year flood plain, but a permit from the local flood plain administrator can be obtained if impacts cannot be avoided (i.e., directional drilling installation, etc.); and,
- 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 not be consistent with state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe approved land use plans or federal land management plans.

The RWD 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 DHHS to help the public water system maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DHHS in December of 2017, wherein no deficiencies were noted. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The RWD 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.

The NDEQ 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 NDEQ. 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 Steve McNulty, DHHS at 402 471-1006 or email steve.mcnulty@nebraska.gov, or Tara Sampson, Water Permits Division, NDEQ at 402 471-4266 or email tara.sampson@nebraska.gov.

Signed this 29th day of June, 2018.

Sincerely,

Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Distribution List
 Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DISTRIBUTION LIST
CASS COUNTY RURAL WATER DISTRICT NO. 1

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
Office of Public Affairs
P.O. Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68509-8922

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN
SERVICES – DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH
Steve McNulty
P.O. Box 95026
Lincoln, NE 68509-5026

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
Mitch Paine
P.O. Box 94676
Lincoln, NE 68509-4676

NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION
Schuyler Sampson /Carey Grell
P.O. Box 30370
Lincoln, NE 68503-0370

DIRECTOR, NEBRASKA STATE
HISTORICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 82554
Lincoln, NE 68508-2554

DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
Steve Charleston
P.O. Box 94666
Lincoln, NE 68509

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Eliza Hines
9325 B South Alda Road
Wood River, NE 68883-9565

LOCAL NEWSPAPER (Public Information Only)
Plattsmouth Journal
410 Main Street
Plattsmouth, NE 68048

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Nick Chevance
Environmental Coordinator
601 Riverfront Drive
Omaha, NE 68102-4226

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT
Ken Shaw
Room 308, Federal Building
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
John Moeschen
State Program Manager
US Army corps of Engineers
Nebraska State Office, Suite 1
8901 South 154th Street
Omaha, NE 68138-3621

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
Chris Simmons/Kelly Beard-Tittone
11201 Renner Blvd
Mail Code: WWPDWIMB
Lenexa, KS 66219

STATE CONSERVATIONIST
Soil Conservation Service
Federal Building, Room 345
100 Centennial Mall North
Lincoln, NE 68508

APPLICANT
Philip C. Brink, Manager
Cass County Rural Water District No. 1
PO Box 67
Murray, NE 68409-0067

CONSULTING ENGINEER
Justin Stine, P.E.
JEO Consulting Group, Inc.
2700 Fletcher Avenue
Lincoln, NE 68504-1113



HWY 76 - PLATTSMOUTH TO MURRAY
WATER MAIN RELOCATIONS
CASS COUNTY RWD #1

PROJECT KEYMAP

PRELIMINARY
NOT FOR
CONSTRUCTION
85%
DATE: 6/24/2018
DRAWN BY: JLD
CHECKED BY: JLD
DATE: 6/24/2018
PROJECT NO: 171817208
SHEET NO: 02/2018
FILE NO: 517817208.dwg
LOCATION: Cass County
DESIGNER: HI A.A.
PROJECT NO: 171817208
SHEET NO: 02/2018
FILE NO: 517817208.dwg
LOCATION: Cass County
DESIGNER: HI A.A.

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