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 Environment and Energy (NDEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Water Main Replacements

APPLICANT: City of Laurel

COUNTY: Cedar

POPULATION: 964

DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311651

TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT: $235,000

PROPOSED 20% DWSRF LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT: $47,000

PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: $188,000

The City of Laurel 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 NDEE, to replace water mains along 2nd Street from Cedar to just past Elm Street.

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 2021 Intended Use Plan (IUP). Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEE, this project was determined to be eligible for a 20-year loan at an interest rate of 1.5% on 80% of the estimated project costs (i.e., 20% will be forgiven), per the criteria listed in the 2021 IUP. In addition to principal and interest, an administrative fee of 0.5% of the loan balance will be assessed. The current residential water rate is $12 per month, with an added consumption charge of $2 for every 1,000 gallons of water used. The long-term annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) would be $13,030. Based upon the 516 active service connections, residential water rates may need to be raised approximately $2.10 per month to address the new debt service.

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, no portion of the project lies within the 100-year flood plain; 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 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 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 May of 2018, wherein one minor deficiency was noted and addressed by the City in June of 2018. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. Laurel 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 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, NDEE at 402 471-4989 or email tom.fuenning@nebraska.gov, or Burton Pflueger, Planning and Aid Division, NDEE at 402 471-1883 or email burton.pflueger@nebraska.gov.



Signed this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 2020.



Sincerely,



Jim Macy

Director

Attachments: Distribution List

Map

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION IMPACT DISTRIBUTION LIST

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(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)

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NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT:

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\*Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this CATEX has been distributed to this list electronically via email instead of physically via a mailed document.

