



Pete Ricketts
Governor

DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY
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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 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 encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME: Blending Well, Transmission Main and Well Rehabilitation
City of Weeping Water, Nebraska

DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER: D311608

ESTIMATED PROJECT AMOUNT: \$700,000

PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT: \$140,000

PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT: \$560,000

The City of Weeping Water has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program jointly administered by the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ). This project has been ranked as a high priority project and is included on the Funding List in the DWSRF State Fiscal Year 2016 Intended Use Plan (IUP). Based on supporting documentation on file with the NDEQ, the City was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan with corresponding loan forgiveness capped at 20% of project costs.

Weeping Water is located in the eastern part of Nebraska, situated south of the City of Omaha. The community has a population of 1,050 according to the 2010 census. Weeping Water has been issued a permit to operate a public water system (PWS) under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179.

In October 2014, the City's Engineer completed a Design Report that evaluated the siting of the proposed supply well and blending transmission main. The PWS consists of three municipal wells, a 320,000 gallon water storage tank with booster pumping to the distribution system. The City's existing wells will all exceed 40 years in age by the time the project is constructed, in excess of the average expected life of a municipal supply well in the State, and have experienced fluctuating levels of Nitrates. With recent monitoring recording levels as

high as 9.22 mg/L support the recommendation in the engineering report that Weeping Water construct a new well. From an evaluation of projected supply needs of the existing system users, the new well will be connected to the existing supply wells to allow for blending and will establish a new primary water source for the community. Test Hole data from the well site showed a nitrate level of 0.592 mg/L, allowing blending to be a feasible alternative.

Lastly, the City may consider sealing the annular space of their existing supply wells depending upon the outcome of the research work being performed by State's Annular Seal Task Force. Any rehabilitation work on the existing wells would be eligible for funding through the proposed loan in accordance with the IUP.

The proposed project was reviewed by numerous Federal and State agencies for environmental impacts. The only responses received indicated that the project would have no effect. Further, the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District indicated that the proposed well site is situated within a Community Water System Protection Area, wherein the district has adopted additional rules and regulations dealing with nitrogen management and a best management practice cost-share to help address nitrate concerns.

The new well will be registered with the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources and a new well construction permit will be required from the Lower Platte South Natural Resources District. A National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Construction Stormwater permit will be required by NDEQ if more than one acre of land is disturbed. The well will be installed on land owned by the City.

The City is eligible for a 20-year loan at an interest rate of 2 percent on 80% of the estimated project costs (i.e., 20% will be forgiven). In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 1 percent of the loan balance will be assessed each year. The revenues from Weeping Water's water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. The projected annual DWSRF Debt Service (including 10% coverage) is \$43,618. Weeping Water's current water base rate for a typical residential connection is \$15.75 per month, with a \$1.58 use charge for every 748 gallons of water furnished. That equates to a water bill of approximately \$32.50 per month, based on a common household water use of 8,000 gallons. With 500 active service connections, household rates may need to be raised \$7.27 to address the new debt service, to approximately \$40 per month.

A Public Hearing was held November 9, 2015, with 40 days advanced posted notice. A presentation of the proposed project was made by the Engineer, including the project scope, costs, financing and schedule. No comments were made by the public.

The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DHHS in May of 2014, wherein four deficiencies were noted, with three being corrected by the system as of June 30, 2014. The project will permanently resolve the last deficiency, if not addressed prior by the system. That completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Financial, and Managerial (TFM) program policy. The City 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, and wherein that assessment(s) will be uploaded to the project file. Lastly, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

The proposed project is determined by DHHS to help the PWS maintain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction or waste discharges will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (i.e., NDNR, NRD, etc.), if necessary. Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of a careful review of the environmental assessment, the engineering reports and other supporting data that are on file with NDEQ. The latter are available for public review upon request and the environmental assessment is attached. The NDEQ will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date shown below. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit directly to Steve McNulty at (402) 471-1006 or email steve.mculty@nebraska.gov of DHHS, or John Danforth at (402) 471-3373 or email john.r.danforth@nebraska.gov of the Water Division of NDEQ.

Signed this 11th day of December, 2015.

Sincerely,



Jim Macy
Director

Attachments: Environmental Assessment
Distribution List
Map