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New York State Approves \$500 Million in Loans & Grants to Upgrade Local Water and Wastewater Systems

\$430 Million for 26 New York City Projects

\$55 Million for Storm Protection Measures on Long Island and Lower Hudson Valley

The New York State Environmental Facilities Corporation (EFC) today approved \$500 million in grants and low-cost loans for clean-water construction projects around the state, including \$55 million for storm-resiliency infrastructure on Long Island and the lower Hudson Valley.

“Preparing for the next big storm will save lives and property while keeping vital wastewater and drinking water systems operating both during and immediately after major storms,” said EFC President and CEO Matthew Driscoll. “New York State is determined to build back better and stronger from Superstorm Sandy. This major investment will help protect critical infrastructure and maintain services for New York residents and businesses.”

State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Joe Martens said, “Protecting and improving water quality is essential for communities to meet the needs of residents and business. The storms New York experienced in recent years – and the damaging weather currently affecting other regions of the U.S. - highlight the importance of helping municipalities build effective, resilient wastewater systems to prevent pollution from impairing drinking water, water bodies and public health.”

New York City Projects

The EFC Board of Directors also approved \$430 million in low-cost financing for improvement to 25 water-quality facilities across all five boroughs of New York City, including:

- NYCDEP Wards Island Water Pollution Control Plant - Grit chamber improvements and upgrade biological nitrogen removal;
- NYCDEP Bowery Bay Water Pollution Control Plant – Upgrade engineering to meet secondary treatment requirements during retrofit for biological nitrogen removal; new electrical wing and boiler wing for main building; and, series of plant improvements;
- NYCDEP Jamaica Bay Water Pollution Control Plant – Improvements to reduce odor impacts in the surrounding community; Phase 1 of the Step-Feed Biological Nutrient Removal project; and upgrades to the air distribution system and efficiency improvements in the final settling tanks;

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- NYCDEP 26th Ward Water Pollution Control Plant – Reconstruction of two sewage pump stations; replacement of piping and valves until a new pump station can be built to mitigate combined sewer overflows;
- NYCDEP Newtown Creek Water Pollution Control Plant – Plant upgrades to improve wastewater discharge system. Improvements are planned in three phases for several buildings and facilities at the plant with the construction and modification of a large number of waste-treatment processes;
- NYCDEP North River Water Pollution Control Plant – Odor control improvements;
- Abatement of sewer overflows at NYCDEP facilities in Spring Creek, East River and Coney Island Creek; and
- NYCDEP Gowanus Canal – Reconstruction and upgrade of flushing tunnel and clean-water pumping station system

Storm Mitigation Projects

The EFC Board of Directors also awarded more than \$15 million in a combination of interest-free loans and grants to storm-mitigation projects in areas hit by Superstorm Sandy in 2012 to protect wastewater facilities:

- Rockland County (a \$6.33 million interest-free loan and a \$2.37 million grant) to replace emergency generators at 21 pump stations in Rockland County Sewer District No. 1, which serves the towns of Ramapo and Clarkstown and several parcels in the Town of Orangetown;
- Village of Ocean Beach, Suffolk County (\$1.87 million no-interest loan and a \$832,576 grant) to elevate critical wastewater pumps and equipment and install a standby, emergency generator among other improvements to the drinking water system;
- Town of North Hempstead, Nassau County (a \$2.33 million no-interest loan and a \$823,881 grant) to improve the resiliency of the sewage collection system in the Port Washington Water Pollution Control District; and,
- City of Newburgh, Orange County (a \$1.78 million interest-free loan and a \$600,375 grant) to install new sewers and other improvements to make the city's sewer system more resilient to storm flows, prevent sewer breaks of raw sewage and to reduce flows to the city's wastewater treatment plant during storms.

The EFC board also approved a total of \$40 million for in resiliency infrastructure projects for drinking water systems on Long Island, including:

- nearly \$4 million grant and \$11 million in interest-free financing, for raising well heads above flood elevation levels, well replacement and standby power generators for the Water Authority of Great Neck North, which serves more than 32,000 people; and
- \$22.5 million, including \$5.5 million in grants, to the Suffolk County Water Authority that serves more than 1 million residents of Long Island. The funds will be used to improve resiliency and redundancy during storms by installing new stronger water mains in Cherry Grove (Fire Island), the Village of Sag Harbor and Village of Huntington, as well as new emergency backup generators at 52 well fields and pump stations in Suffolk County.

Funding for these projects comes from New York’s Storm Mitigation Loan Program, a competitive \$407 million fund to protect water systems in the 14 counties impacted by Superstorm Sandy: Bronx, Greene, Kings, Nassau, New York, Orange, Putnam, Queens, Richmond, Rockland, Suffolk, Sullivan, Ulster, and Westchester. The Storm Mitigation Loan Program is co-administered by EFC and the New York State Department of Health for drinking water projects and EFC and the Department of Environmental Conservation for wastewater projects.

“DOH is pleased to work with our partners at EFC to assist these communities in improving their systems to ensure safe drinking water in times of emergency and always,” said DOH Commissioner Dr. Howard Zucker. “Financing through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund will assist these municipalities in meeting important public health goals.”

Other money-saving loans and grants approved today include:

- Village of Hamilton in Madison County, which will receive an \$8.2 million loan (\$8.1 million interest-free) to upgrade its wastewater treatment plant;
- Village of Whitehall in Warren County, which will receive a \$1.4 million interest-free loan along with \$1 million in state grants and a \$2 million federal grant toward the first phase of a sewer rehabilitation project to protect water quality in Lake Champlain; and
- Village of Cayuga (jointly with the Town of Aurelius in Cayuga County), which was approved for up to \$4.1 million in long-term, interest-free loans following the completion of new treatment plant (replacing existing plant) and new sewers.

EFC is a public benefit corporation dedicated to promoting environmental quality through a wide range of funding and technical assistance focused on protecting, improving and restoring New York’s precious natural resources.

New York State administers the largest and most active revolving loan funds for local wastewater and drinking water systems in the nation. For the 2015 federal fiscal year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has allotted New York State \$155 million for wastewater and related projects under the Clean Water State Revolving Fund and \$42 million for the state’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund.

EFC has refinanced \$3.1 billion in municipal debt payments for sewer and drinking water infrastructure in the past four years, saving local ratepayers more than \$447 million in interest payments across New York State. During that same time period, more than \$6.7 billion in subsidized loans, grants and loan re-financings have been approved by EFC – the largest, four-year investment in clean water infrastructure in New York since the revolving loan funds were created more than 25 years ago. Earlier this year, EFC modified its hardship loan program, making it easier for smaller communities to obtain interest-free loans.

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