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Water Commission Approves \$35.4 Million in Cost-Share for Water Projects

At the North Dakota State Water Commission (SWC) meeting chaired by Lt. Governor Brent Sanford yesterday, the Commission approved \$35.4 million in cost-share requests. The Commission voted to approve funding for several municipal, regional and rural water supply projects, as well as projects related to flood control and general water.

The Water Commission supports local sponsors in development of sustainable water-related projects in North Dakota through the Department of Water Resources (DWR) Cost-Share Program. The primary purpose of the DWR Cost-Share Program is to assist local project sponsors with financial support of water development projects – making them more affordable to local constituents.

The largest cost-share approval at yesterday's meeting included \$9.6 million for the Western Area Water Supply Authority's McKenzie County Water Resource District System 4 project. This project is for the construction of a ground storage reservoir and installation of over 138 miles of transmission pipeline to provide service to 83 additional connections for residential and agricultural services.

"We're grateful to the Water Commission members, Department of Water Resources Director Andrea Travnicek and team members at the DWR for ensuring water projects across the state continue to move forward and support the citizens of North Dakota and our economy," said Sanford.

In another action, and in response to greatly improved drought conditions over the course of the summer, the SWC deactivated the Drought Disaster Livestock Water Supply Program (Program), effective September 1, 2022. The Program was made active in April 2021 in response to severe drought conditions across North Dakota at that time, and in support of an emergency declaration issued by Governor Burgum. Over the past 16 months of Program operation, DWR has provided cost-share for about 840 projects involving 600 producers, with total reimbursements of about \$3.1 million. Under the Program, producers can receive 50 percent cost-share, but no more than \$4,500 per project, and up to three projects per producer.

The SWC heard public comments on proposed cost-share policy updates at the beginning of the meeting. Proposed updates were also presented at eight commissioner-hosted basin meetings around North Dakota. The closing date for the 45-day public comment period is August 15.

“The State Water Commission and the Department of Water Resources strive to ensure cost-share policies are periodically reviewed to address changing conditions, clarifications and provide a sustainable program for water project planning and development,” said Andrea Travnicek, DWR Director. “We’ve really tried to encourage everyone to review the proposed modifications and provide comments for consideration.”

During yesterday’s meeting, the SWC received a copy of the DWR’s Five Year Strategic Plan. The plan will help guide the deployment of resources toward key objectives, goals and tactics that will remain a focus through 2027. This plan is also intended to help create awareness among the public and stakeholders about DWR efforts. The full plan is available at www.dwr.nd.gov.

The 10-member Water Commission consists of Gov. Doug Burgum as chairman, Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring and eight members appointed by the governor to serve six-year terms. For additional information, please visit www.dwr.nd.gov.

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