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Water Commission Approves \$107 Million in Cost-Share for Water Projects

Includes historic funding for Tribal Nation project

BISMARCK, ND- At the North Dakota State Water Commission (SWC) meeting chaired by North Dakota Lieutenant Governor Tammy Miller today, the SWC approved \$107 million in cost-share requests. In total, 26 projects were approved for cost-share, including \$1.35 million for preconstruction efforts related to the Fort Berthold water treatment plant, intake, and raw water line project.

"This is great win for us," MHA Nation Councilman Robert White said. "The house bill recognizes that we are North Dakota citizens and gives us the opportunity to get funding as other communities do. It gives us equal leverage as every township, every county in the state of North Dakota. It's going to mean a great deal for our community."

The Fort Berthold project has an estimated future cost of \$30 million, which would make it the largest project considered for cost-share with a Tribal Nation after the North Dakota legislature unanimously passed HB 1385 during the 2023 Legislative Assembly. North Dakota Century Code previously only allowed the SWC to enter into cost-share agreements with North Dakota political subdivisions, the federal government, other state political subdivisions and Canadian provinces. Tribal Nations were not identified as an eligible partner for funding assistance.

"The cost-share projects approved today highlight our state's commitment to strengthening tribal partnerships and relationships as well as providing permanent protection against catastrophic flooding," Miller said. "By helping local sponsors fund these critical infrastructure projects, we're making North Dakota a more resilient and attractive place to live, work and raise a family."

The SWC also approved \$76.1 million to the Souris River Joint Water Resource District for the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project (MREFPP). Funding for the project was identified by the 2023 Legislative Assembly under Section 14 of Senate Bill 2020 (the Department of Water Resources' appropriation bill) for acquisition, engineering and construction costs.

"The State of North Dakota is proud to continue its ongoing partnership with the Souris River Joint Water Resource District and the City of Minot to provide flood protection along the entire Mouse River corridor," DWR Director Andrea Travnicek said. "Advancement of the Mouse River Enhanced Flood Protection Project is a high priority for DWR and the SWC, and we're excited to see their incredible progress toward flood resiliency in that region of our state."

Since the beginning of the 2023-2025 biennium funding cycle, the SWC has approved cost-share totaling more than \$331 million for water supply, flood protection and other general water management projects across the state. The primary purpose of the cost-share program is to assist local project sponsors with financial support for water development projects. The 10-member SWC consists of Gov. Doug Burgum as chairman, Ag. 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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