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Water Commission Approves Various Water Projects at December Meeting

The North Dakota State Water Commission today approved more than \$16.5 million in cost-share requests for water supply, rural flood control and general water projects across the state.

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 today was \$11.5 million for construction of the Northwest Area Water Supply (NAWS), South Prairie Reservoir and Hydraulic Control Structure. Progress continues to move forward on several phases of the NAWS project through local, state, and federal cooperative efforts. The state's total investment in the project is nearly \$66 million and is anticipated to be completed in 2030. NAWS is designed to provide water to over 80,000 people in north central North Dakota.

The Commission also approved an \$18.2 million loan request from the Garrison Diversion Conservancy District for the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP). The funding source for the loan is the Water Infrastructure Revolving Loan Fund, which was created by the 2021 Legislature and requires Water Commission approval. The Bank of North Dakota will administer the loan.

Since the state- and locally sponsored RRVWSP was initiated in 2013, the state has invested over \$100 million toward its advancement. Once completed, the project will serve 35 cities and rural water systems and nearly 50% of North Dakota's population in the central and eastern parts of the state.

"Meeting our state's growing demand for reliable water supplies and promoting wise management of our water resources will support our communities, our economy and the prosperity of North Dakotans for generations to come," said Lt. Gov. Brent Sanford, who chaired today's State Water Commission meeting for Gov. Doug Burgum. "We're grateful to the Water Commission and Department of Water Resources for continuing to provide pivotal guidance and significant support for evolving water development projects across North Dakota including beneficial flood protection, quality water supplies and other crucial water infrastructure."

In addition to consideration of cost-share requests and various project updates during this morning's Water Commission meeting, commissioners also held the first of several anticipated discussions this afternoon related to potential modifications to cost-share policies.

"At the meeting that was held earlier this morning, we saw ongoing Commission support of smart and efficient water supply projects and beneficial flood resiliency efforts from across the state," said DWR Director Andrea Travnicek. "It was also a very productive afternoon session where the Commission demonstrated their interest to improve upon existing cost-share policies – including the crafting of language that more appropriately addresses contemporary water management and development opportunities. That process will take some time, but today's meeting was a great first step. Additionally, the DWR will gather public input and continue working with stakeholders regarding cost-share policies over the next year."

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

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