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**From:** EPA Press Office [mailto:press=epa.gov@cmail20.com] **On Behalf Of** EPA Press Office  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 20, 2018 5:39 PM  
**To:** Abboud, Michael <abboud.michael@epa.gov>  
**Subject:** EPA Provides Nearly \$70 Million Loan for Omaha Water Infrastructure Upgrades - Preview

## EPA Provides Nearly \$70 Million Loan for Omaha Water Infrastructure Upgrades

*City of Omaha receives \$69.7 million WIFIA loan to improve water quality*

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**WASHINGTON** (June 20, 2018) - The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a \$69.7 million loan to the City of Omaha, Nebraska, to help finance its Saddle Creek Retention Treatment Basin. This marks the second loan to be issued under EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program.

**"Through EPA's WIFIA loan to Omaha, we are investing in the Heartland's water infrastructure and following through on our commitment to uphold one of EPA's core responsibilities: providing Americans with clean and safe water,"** said EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt. **"This water infrastructure project will produce good jobs, improve local water quality, and better protect the health of more than 400,000 Nebraskans."**

During wet weather events, the combined sewer system in the Saddle Creek Basin fills with stormwater and overflows, sending millions of gallons of polluted runoff and sewage into the Little Papillion Creek, a tributary of the Missouri River. When the Saddle Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Retention Treatment Basin is completed in 2022, it will collect and treat up to 320 million gallons of wastewater and stormwater daily that would have spilled into the creek during wet weather. This represents a nearly 90 percent cut in local water pollution and a significant public health and environmental protection achievement.

**“Omaha has worked closely with the EPA at all levels to execute the Clean Solutions for Omaha Program in a way that will be sustainable for the future and save our ratepayers about 20 million dollars in interest on this project,”** said Mayor of Omaha Jean Stothert. **“We are pleased to be selected as one of 11 projects nationwide that will receive this low interest financing from the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act. I want to thank the EPA for selecting the Saddle Creek Retention Treatment Basin project for this assistance.”**

The project has an estimated construction cost of \$93 to \$103 million. The overall project is estimated to cost \$142.2 million and EPA’s WIFIA loan will help finance nearly half of the project’s eligible costs, including study, design, construction administration, inspection, material testing, land acquisition, and construction costs. Because the WIFIA program offers loans with low, fixed interest rates, EPA’s loan is expected to save the City of Omaha up to \$20 million. Project construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2019 and will create 165 construction jobs.

**“Thank you to the Environmental Protection Agency and Administrator Pruitt for supporting our efforts in Nebraska to build high-quality water infrastructure,”** said Governor Pete Ricketts (R-NE). **“Modernizing and upgrading our infrastructure is key to delivering a great quality of life and helping grow the greater Omaha area and communities across our state.”**

**“The WIFIA loan of nearly \$70 million going to Omaha is a big deal for Nebraskans in the metro area,”** said Senator Deb Fischer (R-NE). **“I worked with local leaders and the EPA to deliver this investment, which will help the community address combined sewer overflow issues in Omaha’s Saddle Creek Basin. Providing this assistance will alleviate some of the financial stress on households while also protecting Nebraska families’ access to clean water so they can stay healthy and safe.”**

**“This is great news for our Omaha community. Federal programs that provide our state with the flexibility to address our water infrastructure needs, like the WIFIA loan, will allow Nebraska to better serve its citizens and improve public health in Omaha,”** said Congressman Don Bacon (NE-02). **“Thanks to the collaboration of federal, state, and local partners, this loan will create jobs and contribute to the long-term growth of our community.”**

**“The Saddle Creek project is one of 60 the city has undertaken to protect waterways from combined sewer overflows,”** said EPA Region 7 Administrator Jim Gulliford. **“The WIFIA loan should provide the City of Omaha immediate capital to modernize their water infrastructure at the Saddle Creek Basin.”**

## **Background**

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) of 2014, the WIFIA program is a new federal loan and guarantee program at EPA that aims to

accelerate investment in the nation's water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects.

In April 2018, EPA [announced the availability of additional WIFIA funding](#) that could provide as much as \$5.5 billion in loans, which could leverage over \$11 billion in water infrastructure projects. This year's WIFIA Notice of Funding Availability highlights the importance of protecting public health including reducing exposure to lead and other contaminants in drinking water systems and updating the nation's aging infrastructure. Prospective borrowers seeking WIFIA financing in 2018 must submit a letter of interest by July 31, 2018.

According to EPA's estimate of drinking water and wastewater needs, over \$743 billion is needed for water infrastructure improvements. The WIFIA program plays an important part in fulfilling this need and in the [President's Infrastructure Plan](#), which calls for increasing the program's funding authorization and expanding project eligibility.

For more information about the WIFIA program and about the Saddle Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Retention Treatment Basin, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wifi>

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