

EPA Provides Multi-Million Dollar Loan for Omaha Water Infrastructure Upgrades

City of Omaha, Neb., receives \$69.7 million WIFIA loan to help improve water quality and protect public health

Washington- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued a \$69.7 million loan to the City of Omaha, Nebraska, to help finance the 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 returning EPA to its core mission: providing Americans with clean air, water, and land,” 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 600,000 Omahans.”

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 Retention Treatment Basin is completed in 2022, it can 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.

[Placeholder for **Mayor of Omaha** Quote]

The 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.

[Placeholder for Governor Ricketts quote]

[Placeholder for Congressman Don Bacon quote]

[Placeholder for Senator Fisher quote]

[Placeholder for Regional Administrator Jim Guilliford quote]

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act 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 (NOFA) 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 (LOI) 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 about the Saddle Creek Combined Sewer Overflow Retention Treatment Basin, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>