

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: Announces \$42 million WIFIA loan to reduce flooding in underserved communities in Milwaukee

Posted on Wednesday, Jan 19, 2022

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WASHINGTON (Jan. 19, 2022) — Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a \$42 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act loan to Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District. This investment will help fund the Waterway Flood Management and Restoration Project and will expand stormwater management capacity and reduce flood risk in historically underserved communities. In the first year of the Biden-Harris administration, EPA closed 29 WIFIA loans that are investing over \$5 billion in communities across the country to protect public health and the environment while creating over 36,000 jobs.

“Investing in water infrastructure strengthens communities while creating good paying jobs,” **said EPA Region 5 Administrator Debra Shore.** “This loan will help Milwaukee communities deal with the problems caused by their aging infrastructure and create a sustainable water system for the long-term.”

MMSD’s Waterway Flood Management and Restoration Project will improve stormwater management using traditional and green infrastructure solutions. The project includes design and construction of a 31-million-gallon stormwater management facility. This facility will be developed on 15 acres of abandoned industrial property, which will also be transformed into a green space. In addition, MMSD will design and construct a 210-acre-foot flood storage basin to increase capacity of the culverts. It will also replace of 2,800 feet of concrete channel lining

with natural channel designs and reconstruct 2,200 feet of non-concrete lined stream channel. Together, these projects will reduce flood risk to hundreds of residential and commercial buildings while decreasing sewer overflows. Incorporating green infrastructure will result in more green spaces and mitigate urban heat island effects in communities with environmental justice concerns.

“On behalf of our ratepayers, I want to thank the EPA for this low-interest loan that will help make homes and businesses in Milwaukee more resilient to flooding and kick off the cleanup of more than 100 years of polluted sediment in our rivers,” **said Kevin Shafer, executive director of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District.**

EPA’s \$42 million WIFIA loan will finance nearly half of the \$85 million project. MMSD will save approximately \$5.5 million with low-cost WIFIA financing. Project construction and operation are expected to create an estimated 130 jobs and construction is expected to be completed in 2027. This WIFIA loan is the first of three under MMSD’s WIFIA Master Agreement.

For more information about the WIFIA program, visit: <https://www.epa.gov/wifia>.

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the WIFIA program is a federal loan and guarantee program administered by EPA. WIFIA’s aim is to accelerate investment in the nation’s water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications for projects that will result in billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs.