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Governor Chris Christie Signs Legislation to Promote Vital Clean Water and Environmental Protection Projects

Tuesday, August 31, 2010 • Tags: [Energy and the Environment](#)

Trenton, NJ – Governor Chris Christie today continued his commitment to environmental protection and a strong and secure clean water infrastructure by signing legislation to appropriate \$821 million in no-cost and low-cost loans for crucial water and sewer infrastructure projects across the state. The financing, administered through the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Financing Program, will make available approximately \$549 million for clean water project loans and \$272 million for drinking water project loans, with the federal government picking up at least half of the cost.

Governor Christie signed the legislation today in Mount Olive, the site of the Musconetcong Sewerage Authority (MSA), which stands to receive \$2.5 million in zero percent and market rate loans. A majority of the MSA's funds will come from the federal government, with the remainder to be bonded through the Environmental Infrastructure Program.

"It is imperative that we maintain the integrity of the State's water supply and sewer systems, to protect the public health and ensure our continued commitment to the environment," said Governor Christie. "There is nothing more important to our residents."

"This is a vital tool in our effort to safeguard the public water supply," added Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Bob Martin. "It fits right into the prime mission of the DEP: to protect the environment - our air, water, land, and natural resources and public health."

The infrastructure projects also will create hundreds of jobs throughout the state.

More than 75 applications from cities, towns, counties, authorities, utilities and private associations already are being considered this year for much-needed money for clean water and drinking water infrastructure projects, in a program that dates to the 1980s and has previously financed 749 projects totaling almost \$5 billion.

Successful applicants can get zero and low interest loans, at one-quarter or one-half the market rate, with no bond insurance required, no arbitrage concerns and no wait for funding or interest payments during construction, among other benefits.

In the case of the MSA, which operates a regional facility serving towns in Morris and Sussex counties, plus the International Trade Center in Mount Olive, the agency is in line to get two loans to improve the reliability, efficiency and safety of existing outdated sewage treatment systems, while upgrading its pumping stations.

The available money for all of the projects comes from a revolving loan program administered in part by the New Jersey Environmental Infrastructure Trust (EIT), an independent state financing authority. It provides loans to local governments for construction of wastewater treatment facilities, sludge management systems, plus sewer overflow, stormwater projects and non-point source pollution management projects.

It also offers loans to publicly and privately owned drinking water systems for the construction or upgrade of drinking water facilities, transmission and distribution systems, storage facilities, and source development.

Funds are made available under the federal Clean Water and Safe Drinking Water Acts and various state bond acts. The program provides zero percent interest rate loans to local government units from the State DEP for up to half the allowable project costs, and a market rate loan from the Trust for the remaining allowable costs.

For information about EIT and its financing programs, visit www.njeit.org

For a copy of the legislation (A-2928) and list of potential projects, visit njleg.state.nj.us

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