

State Awards Local Water System Grants

By Administrator
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Governor Roy Cooper announced today \$164 million in loans and grants to help pay for 76 drinking water and wastewater projects statewide. “This funding opportunity will allow North Carolina to make meaningful investments in our communities,” said Governor Cooper. “These projects will help promote equitable access to clean water, strengthen our economy and advance climate resilience across the state.”

Notable projects approved in the latest funding round include:

Pilot Mountain, in Surry County, will receive \$2,845,000 in Wastewater Reserve in both loans and grants to replace aged wastewater collection system infrastructure.

Wilkesboro, in Wilkes County, will receive \$3,000,000 in Wastewater Reserve grants and an additional \$30,000,000 in a combination of State Revolving Fund loan and principal forgiveness, to expand their wastewater treatment facility.

Stovall, in Granville County, will receive a \$1,757,360 Drinking Water Reserve grant for replacement of aged water lines and hydrants, and water tank, water main and associated improvements to increase water quality. The new waterlines will replace leaking lines, reducing the amount of water the system needs to buy from its supplier and directly reducing costs of service.

Davie County will receive \$9,125,427 for a water supply improvement project through a Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan. This project creates a stronger regional water system by expanding Davie County’s Cooleemee Water Treatment Plant and adding an interconnection to the City of Mocksville, allowing Mocksville to decommission its Lagle Water Treatment Plant.

Elizabeth City in Pasquotank County will receive a \$676,715 Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loan and \$676,715 in a Principal Forgiveness loan to address issues to complete the current water treatment plant rehabilitation project.

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Projects in 19 counties will receive funding to conduct asset inventories and assessments of drinking water and wastewater systems to plan for long-term rehabilitation and replacement of aging and critical infrastructure. A list of all projects funded statewide by town or county is available online . These projects are funded through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, Drinking Water and Wastewater State Reserves, and the Viable Utility Reserve. Projects funded from the Viable Utility Reserve are conditional upon approval by the Local Government Commission.

“This funding gives North Carolina’s rural communities an opportunity to address the challenges of aging infrastructure and climate change, so they can become more viable, improve their resiliency and compete for economic development,” said Department of Environmental Quality Secretary Elizabeth S. Biser.

The \$754 million in funding requests by North Carolina utilities far exceeded the \$157 million in available funding for this round, as shown in the 2021 Fall Funded Projects Summary

. Studies show that North Carolina needs from \$17 billion to \$26 billion in upgrades to its water and sewer infrastructure statewide over a twenty-year period.

The project funding was approved at the State Water Infrastructure Authority's

Feb. 9 meeting. The Authority is an independent body with primary responsibility for awarding federal and state funding for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. Other responsibilities include developing a state water infrastructure master plan, recommending ways to maximize the use of available loan and grant funding resources, and examining best and emerging practices.

The application period for the next round of funding for water and wastewater infrastructure projects, which will include the first awarding of the American Rescue Plan Act’s State Fiscal Recovery Funds, ends on May 2 at 5:00 p.m. The funding application forms and training schedule are available at: <https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-infrastructure/i-need-funding>