



DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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DEQ awards \$1 Million in stimulus funding to Ball

BATON ROUGE – Today, the Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality awarded \$1 Million to the town of Ball to go toward wastewater improvement projects. The award represents the next in a series of 55 total awards that the department will be issuing to cities and municipalities across the state.

DEQ received approximately \$43 million from the U.S. EPA as part of the federal stimulus package for the Clean Water State Revolving Fund, also known as CWSRF, to support wastewater improvement and “green infrastructure” projects.

“We’re using this money to address wastewater treatment concerns across the entire state,” said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett. “We know by the number of applications we received that the wastewater infrastructure throughout the state, and the nation for that matter, is in dire need of repair. Since that issue is a top priority, we made a concerted effort to get funding to those municipalities that met the criteria set by the department.”

Ball, located in Rapides Parish, is receiving funding for improvements to its existing wastewater treatment facility. As part of the plan, Ball is receiving \$1,000,000 of ARRA funding for reconstruction and rehabilitation to its existing sewer pump stations and duplex grinder stations. As part of this plan, Ball is addressing the excessive infiltration and inflow problems that have caused water flows to overload the pump stations and damage the force mains. This work will consist of television inspection, followed by point repairs on selected lines. The project will also include the installation of emergency power supplies and monitoring equipment at some pump stations.

To ensure the benefits from the stimulus package were felt statewide, the department looked at compliance issues and regional diversity to ensure there would be widespread sewer system improvements across the state. The department also looked at projects where there was a possibility to eliminate any imminent threats to human health or the environment. Financial constraints were also taken under consideration. Communities that did not have the ability to repay loans were targeted. The average median household income for the 55 selected municipalities is \$22,785; well below the state’s median household income. Additionally, DEQ considered criteria such as project costs, population served, requested amount, a community’s ability to assume additional debt, and projects that would provide economic recovery.

The federal stimulus package allows states to keep up to four percent of their award. The DEQ opted to keep none of the allowable administrative set-aside dollars; choosing instead to direct the stimulus funds to support wastewater improvement projects across the state.

The 55 selected municipalities across 42 parishes do not have to repay their “loan awards” because the DEQ is allowing the 55 recipient municipalities to receive a zero percent interest loan with 100 percent principal forgiveness. However, each of the 55 recipients must go through the standard loan process, since the CWSRF program is not set up to offer grants.