



## DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

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### **DEQ, Monroe finalize**

BATON ROUGE – The Louisiana Department of Environmental Quality finalized a low-interest loan on Tuesday afternoon with Monroe city officials that will enable the city to continue to repair its wastewater treatment system.

Monroe borrowed \$14 million for the fifth phase of the project. The interest rate for this loan was at 0.95 percent, which DEQ recently lowered from 2.95 percent.

The city will use the money to reduce sewer system inflow and infiltration within the collection system. The city's system consists of more than 330 miles of pipe, some of which was installed in the 1920s and 1930s. Because this pipe is in poor condition, extraneous water enters the wastewater system through cracks in the pipes, manholes and other entry points when it rains.

For this phase of the city's project, Monroe has hired a contractor to rehabilitate the system in the central part of the city; South Grand St., South 13<sup>th</sup> Street, Desiard St. and Bright St. By ensuring that manholes have proper leak protection, repairing or replacing pipes and making other necessary repairs the city will be have a more reliable wastewater treatment system that will be more easily maintained.

“It's a positive thing to see a community make smart business decisions while stimulating the economy and protecting the environment,” said DEQ Secretary Harold Leggett. “By using this low-interest loan provided by the DEQ State Revolving Loan Fund, the people of Monroe will have a quality wastewater system that will be protective of human health and the environment, while enabling the city to look to future growth. Just as important, by repairing the sewer system, the city is helping the local economy. People have to pour concrete, weld and conduct other services to complete this project and that boils down to jobs.”

Louisiana's Clean Water State Revolving Loan Fund program offers low-interest loans to communities for the construction or upgrade of wastewater treatment works and other water quality improvement projects. The program was created by the Clean Water Act Amendments of 1987 and the first loans in Louisiana were made in 1990. Since then more than \$400 million in loans have been made to Louisiana communities.

State Revolving Loan Projects for construction of community sewerage systems must be publicly owned. The applicant must be a public entity with jurisdiction over collection, treatment, and disposal of sanitary sewage within its service area. An applicant for a non-point source pollution management and estuary improvement project may be any individual, organization, or public entity.