

Monument Sanitation District, March 21

District to pursue state nutrient grant funding

By Jim Kendrick

On March 21, District Manager Mike Wicklund advised the Monument Sanitation District board on the \$15 million in nutrient grant funding proposed by Gov. John Hickenlooper in House Bill 13-1191. When approved, these grants would be available to the 45 public wastewater treatment facilities in Colorado that are rated for wastewater flows of 2 million gallons per day or more. No final vote by the Legislature had been scheduled at OCN's deadline for this edition.

The district is a one-third owner of the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility (WWTF), which has a rated capacity of 4.2 million gallons per day (MGD), though its average flow is about 1.1 MGD and peak flows rarely exceed 1.3 MGD.

The Hickenlooper grants would be used for planning, design, construction, or improvements required to meet new treatment limits for removal of total phosphorus and total inorganic nitrogen in treated effluent that are contained in the state Water Quality Control Commission's new Control Regulation 85. These tighter restrictions went into effect on March 1.

Wicklund noted that the district's persistence in providing testimony to the Colorado

Legislature and directly lobbying Hickenlooper in person, with the help of Fountain Sanitation District Manager Jim Heckman, had led to creation of House Bill 13-1191. For more details on Monument Sanitation District's and the Colorado Rural Communities Coalition's lobbying efforts to prevent immediate imposition of the new state nutrient restrictions that cannot be achieved with any currently available or predicted treatment technology, see www.ocn.me/v12n6.htm#juc.

The rules for dividing this grant money among the 45 eligible treatment facilities have not been defined, but any grant money would be welcomed by the district.

The absence of Chairman Ed DeLaney was excused.

Urgency for grant application

Director Chuck Robinove asked Wicklund to have engineering consultant firm Tetra Tech provide Facility Manager Bill Burks planning, design, and cost information for installation of new phosphorus treatment equipment at the Tri-Lakes Wastewater Treatment Facility as soon as possible. The information will be necessary for Burks to be able to submit a grant application to the state Water Quality Control Division as soon as possible that shows that this facility is ready to commit funds and initiate a construction contract promptly.

The district expects the Senate to approve the bill as amended by the Appropriations Committee due to the Democratic majority's support of this Hickenlooper initiative.

Details of the governor's grant plan

House Bill 13-1191 would appropriate \$15 million from the state General Fund to the Water Quality Control Division of the Department of Public Health and Environment for one-time grants to the 45 largest state wastewater treatment facilities, rated at 2 million gallons of flow per day or more, "to award grants from the fund to local governments pursuant to rules promulgated by the Water Quality Control Commission for the planning, design, construction, or improvement of domestic wastewater treatment works owned or operated by a local government that are needed to comply with the commission's nutrients management control regulation."

The approved House bill states that "the commission shall promulgate rules as necessary to administer this grant including rules defining eligibility and criteria for awarding grants" and that "the criteria must give priority to the applicants that have the lowest financial ability to pay for the necessary construction improvements." (http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/1E95DAB0015B3FFB87257AEE005853C0?Open&file=HB1191_C_002.pdf)

The original bill's Joint Budget Committee fiscal impact statement of Feb. 6 listed a required appropriation of \$58,588 for funding 1.0 full-time equivalent (FTE) employee plus operating and capital expenses

for the grant program for the fiscal year starting on July 1. The total dropped to \$53,112 for the following fiscal year. The fiscal impact statement said the original bill did not include required appropriations for payments necessary for the staffer's health and disability insurance and retirement benefits: \$9,915 for the first fiscal year and \$10,335 for the second fiscal year. (http://www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/1E95DAB0015B3FFB87257AEE005853C0?Open&file=HB1191_00.pdf)

The amended bill approved by the Colorado House included revisions that allow the division to "retain up to five percent of the moneys in the fund to cover the cost of administering the projects or grants" (up to \$750,000). (www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/1E95DAB0015B3FFB87257AEE005853C0?Open&file=HB1191_r1.pdf)

The Joint Budget Committee fiscal impact statement of Feb. 15 also included an increased allocation of funding up to \$79,828 for 1.0 FTE in the clean water program and operating/capital costs to administer the \$15 million fund during the state fiscal year that will start on July 1. (www.leg.state.co.us/clics/clics2013a/csl.nsf/fsbillcont3/1E95DAB0015B3FFB87257AEE005853C0?Open&file=HB1191_hse.pdf)

On March 20, the Senate Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Energy Committee recommended two amendments to HB-13-1191 in its resolution that was forwarded to the Senate Appropriations Committee. The



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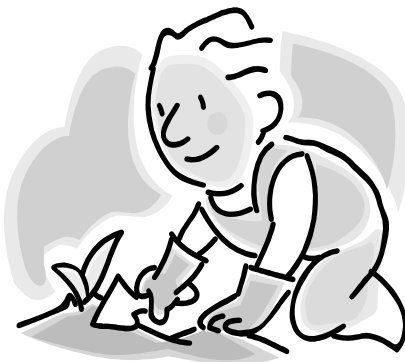


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