

Legislative Funding Will Accelerate RRVWSP Progress

By Kimberly Cook

Thanks to the 2023 North Dakota Legislature, the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP) has a commitment from the state to provide drought protection to nearly half of the state's residents.

"We thank the lawmakers who supported legislation that will make this drought resiliency project a reality within the next 10 years," says Duane DeKrey, Garrison Diversion Conservancy District (Garrison Diversion) general manager. "To receive legislative intent during this session is a big deal for the project and we're grateful the state has committed to seeing the project through until it's completed." Garrison Diversion is a co-sponsor of the RRVWSP along with Lake Agassiz Water Authority (LAWA).

North Dakota lawmakers approved legislative intent for the RRVWSP totaling \$953 million in future funding, including \$180 million in the Department of Water Resources budget, SB 2020, for the 2023-2025 biennium. "This budget will help improve North Dakota's resiliency to floods and droughts. It supports beneficial use of our most abundant water supply, the Missouri River. And it allows us to work smarter and more efficiently in support of our team. As a result, North Dakotans will experience the benefits of this legislation for decades," Department of Water Resources Director Andrea Travnicek said. Gov. Doug Burgum signed SB 2020 on May 12.

In addition, long-term, affordable financing was approved for cities and rural water systems participating in the RRVWSP that utilizes the state's water infrastructure revolving loan fund (WIRLF). "Access to long-term, low-interest loans means cities and water systems will better be able to afford to participate in the project. They will reap the drought resiliency and economic development rewards that having a plentiful water source provides," says Merri Mooridian, Garrison Diversion administrative officer and deputy program manager of RRVWSP administration.

The approved funding will allow construction to continue a stretch of 43 miles of pipeline, as well as the design work of an additional 72 miles of pipeline. When completed, the RRVWSP will access water from the McClusky Canal and convey it via buried pipelines to communities and rural water systems from central North Dakota to the eastern side of the state.

"LAWA is thankful the state agrees that now is the time to harness the natural resources provided by the Missouri River. Our legislators have recognized time is of the essence, and providing a funding commitment to the Red River Valley Water Supply Project reduces the risk of ongoing inflation," says LAWA chairman and Fargo mayor Dr. Tim Mahoney. "This is a historic legislative session that will provide far-reaching drought resiliency benefits to North Dakota."



RRVWSP Construction Kicks Off

Near Carrington, construction crews have kicked off the 2023 construction season on the Red River Valley Water Supply Project (RRVWSP), focusing on the 72-inch transmission pipeline in Foster County that will eventually span from the McClusky Canal to the Sheyenne River.

In May, the crew began prepping the right of way for the remaining stretch of pipeline falling under the nine-mile construction contract started in 2022. The work consisted of removing topsoil, dewatering and setting up equipment. Pipe installation began in early June. Contractors are scheduled to wrap up substantial completion by the end of November 2023.

The discharge structure, where the water will enter the Sheyenne River, was completed in 2022. It is located about six miles south of Cooperstown. The Missouri River Intake, four miles south of Washburn, is also now complete. Final restoration of the site is currently underway.



THANK YOU!

**ND LEGISLATORS &
STATE WATER COMMISSION!**



