CITY OF Dickinson North Dakota | PUBLIC WORKS

Senate Bill 2020
House Appropriations E&E Division
Thursday, March 9, 2023 at 8am
Testimonial: Gary Zuroff, Public Works Director, City of Dickinson

In my capacity as Public Works Director of the City of Dickinson, I write to express my endorsement of funding the expansion of the Southwest Water Treatment Plant (SWTP) from its current six million gallons-per-day (MGD) to its eventual capacity of 18 MGD. This process will involve shifting the existing 12 MGD Dickinson Water Treatment Plant (DWTP) processes to the upgraded Southwest Plant.

At present, the DWTP provides treated water to the Southwest Pipeline Project (SWPP). It is the only source of treated drinking water being delivered to 33 communities, numerous bulk customers, and more than 7,500 rural water customers in southwest North Dakota. In Dickinson it provides over 25,000 people with award-winning quality water. Each day, the city's residents and businesses require about six million gallons of reliable, safe water. It's essential to each and every one of them - 24/7.

Quality water is also essential to our city's economy. Every sector of our economy relies on its water resources. And inevitably, any interruption in the supply of water for the growing city would cripple its economy and stifle its growth. Since being Southwest Water Authority's (SWA) first customer in 1991, Dickinson population has grown almost 60%. It has become, by area, the eight largest city in the state and the most populated in the southwest. Yet, in the 10 square miles the city encompasses, water capacity remains a concern to developers.

With a majority of the DWTP's original equipment having exceeded 50 years in age, the plant operators must take increasingly arduous and costly measures to keep the machinery functioning. Moreover, with the much of the equipment being well past intended lifespan, a breakdown or malfunction is a plausible danger. In the event of a malfunction or failure of a critical component, the plant's ability to provide treated water to southwestern North Dakota would be substantially hindered.

Reliable treatment capabilities will help guarantee the city will continue to have its contracted 6 MGD available and the ability to keep growing. Since building water infrastructure such as the water treatment plant expansion takes time, funding in the next biennium is requested for the ongoing prosperity of southwest communities like Dickinson.

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With all of the above in mind, I am testifying in support of funding the expansion of the water treatment plant - a cost-efficient and lasting solution. Hastening the implementation of the expansion would bring immense advantage to the city, its neighboring communities, rural customers, and additional water systems relying on the SWPP.

Funding the SWPP is an investment in southwest North Dakota's future, its economic wellbeing and the quality of life of its residents. I ask that your financial support of this vital infrastructure that benefits so many people in all aspects of their lives.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,

Gary Zuroff, Public Works Director,
City of Dickinson

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