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SUBJECT: Governor signs bonding bill for Duluth projects

BY: Pakou Ly

Governor signs bonding bill for Duluth projects

Governor Pawlenty signed the bonding bill today giving the green light for the Duluth International Airport (\$11.7 million) terminal project and providing \$27 million for the state's Wastewater Infrastructure Fund (WIF), which is geared towards projects such as those requested by the City of Duluth for the East Interceptor sanitary sewer overflow tank and the Western Lake Superior Sanitary District's (WLSSD) Polk Street pump station and storage facility.

Work on the airport terminal could start as early as July this year. "We are pleased that the legislature and Governor recognize the statewide significance of the Duluth International Airport. These funds will help complete Phase 2 of our work to replace the existing terminal facilities making us an even more attractive and competitive market for air travel," says Brian Ryks, Executive Director, Duluth Airport Authority.

The City of Duluth and WLSSD will need to apply for funding through WIF but both projects are high priorities on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's project list and poised to meet scoring criteria for funding.

"We are very pleased that the Wastewater Infrastructure Fund (WIF) remained at \$27 million as passed by the legislature," said Marianne Bohren, WLSSD executive director. "These funds will be used to provide grant assistance to high priority wastewater priorities across the State such as our Polk Street pump station and storage basin project. Both the WLSSD and the City of Duluth are challenged to meet the mandates of the Consent Decree and we would like to acknowledge our local legislators who worked diligently to ensure the bonding bill presented to the Governor included adequate funding to ensure we meet these mandates." WLSSD plans to

solicit bids for its Polk Street project later this month and construction is expected to begin in June.

“We are confident that our project will meet the WIF funding criteria. This funding will help Duluth’s efforts to protect Lake Superior in accordance with the Consent Decree and reduce the burden on our rate payers,” says Mayor Don Ness.

An estimated \$8 million is needed to complete the next two phases of work on the City’s East Interceptor sanitary sewer overflow tank. Work could start this summer to construct an 8 million gallon storage tank, replacement of a maintenance building, and new bathroom facilities. The SSO tank is required under the city’s consent decree with the Environmental Protection Agency and the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Total cost of the project is estimated to be \$18 million and could be completed in the next two years.

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