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Marie Prezioso
West Virginia Water
Development Authority

Marie Prezioso is the Executive Director of the West Virginia Water Development Authority, appointed to the role by Governor Jim Justice in July 2017. Prezioso is responsible for the management and operations of the Authority and chairs the Funding and Technical Review Committee for the West Virginia Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council. She also serves on the Finance Committee for the Council of Infrastructure Financing Authorities, is a Trustee for the West Virginia Investment Management Board, and is on the Board of Commissioners for the Charleston-Kanawha Housing Authority.

Funding Water and Sewer Projects: West Virginia Gets Needed Infusion of Dollars

West Virginia is moving in the right direction to attract new companies wanting to locate in the state and encouraging expansion of existing companies. Funding water and sewer construction projects plays an essential role, not only for economic development but, most importantly, for the health and welfare of the people living in our communities.

At the West Virginia Legislature's special session in April, Governor Jim Justice sent legislation – and under the leadership of Senate President Craig Blair and House of Delegates Speaker Roger Hanshaw, legislation was passed – that authorized \$250,000,000 to fund the West Virginia Economic Development Grant Fund at the Water Development Authority (WDA). During the 2022 regular session, Speaker Hanshaw introduced HB 4566, which was the legislation creating

HB 4566 first authorizes money in the fund to be used for bid overruns on water and sewer projects. Addressing project bid overruns is critical. Before a project is authorized to bid, it must have funding commitments equal to the total estimated project cost. This requirement allows projects to begin construction shortly after receiving bids. The recent volatility in material and labor costs has created a major problem because project sponsors revise estimates and must find additional funding before going to bid. If the additional funding is not obtained prior to bidding, then the project sponsor runs the risk of not closing in the 90-day bid hold period, since it cannot enter into contracts without having the required funding to pay the contract amounts. Even if additional funds are obtained, the project sponsors run the risk of bids being in excess of committed funds. Currently, there are projects with bids

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this Fund. The legislation allows water and sewer (wastewater) projects to receive funding needed for bid overruns; provides matches needed to receive federal dollars and funding projects that extend or expand water, stormwater, and/or wastewater service to enhance economic development or for unserved areas in the state; and for covering costs for utilities who agree to merge. HB 4566 passed March 12 and was signed by the Governor on March 28.

obtained that exceed the funding available. Most projects have more than one source of funding. The project sponsor's team works with the funding agencies to see if more funding can be obtained. HB 4566 will allow the WDA to fill the gap when all traditional funding sources are exhausted.

The infusion of federal dollars to the state is another win for West Virginia water and sewer projects. With the bipartisan federal



legislation Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, passed by Congress last year, West Virginia will receive multiple millions of dollars in federal funding over the next five years. A portion of this will be in the form of grants and low interest loans through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WVDEP) and Drinking Water Treatment Revolving Fund (West Virginia Bureau of Public Health)). Additional funding from this legislation will go to the Abandoned Mine Lands, administered by the WVDEP, which provides grants to water and sewer projects. U.S. Senators Shelley Moore

Capito and Joe Manchin, along with Congressman David McKinley, voted for this legislation that will greatly help West Virginia. Some of this funding will require state matches.

Additionally, West Virginia’s Congressional delegation has directed multi-millions of dollars for water and wastewater projects through the Congressional Directed Spending in the Federal Budget passed this year, and recently they received applications for funding in next year’s budget.

In addition to the above, West Virginia also receives funding through the United State Department of Agriculture, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Appalachian Regional Commission, U.S. Economic Development Administration, and Community Development Block Grants. At the federal and state levels, funding agencies work together to back projects.

The chart on this page shows the new loans and grant dollars processed by WDA during the last three fiscal years. With all the new funding, it is exciting

to think what the list will look like in the next three years.

Established in 1972 by the West Virginia Legislature, the WDA commenced services in 1974. It was authorized to provide financial assistance to local governmental agencies to help them meet the requirements of state and federal water pollution control and safe drinking water laws, thereby protecting the health of the state’s citizens, improving water quality, and protecting the environment while constructing and upgrading infrastructure to attract economic development. In 1994, the Legislature created the Infrastructure and Jobs Development Council (IJDC) to coordinate and review the funding of water, wastewater, and economic development projects in the state. The WDA serves as the administrative agency for IJDC and the designated fiduciary of the Infrastructure Fund. The WDA operates under the supervision of a seven-member board, chaired by Governor Justice. Ann Urling, the Governor’s Deputy Chief of Staff, serves as his designee on the board. ▼

New Loans and Grant Dollars Processed by WDA

