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News Release

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USDA Invests \$12 Million in Water and Wastewater Infrastructure in Dunnellon, Florida

Investments Will Serve Over 7,000 Residents

GAINESVILLE –Florida Rural Development State Director Sydney Gruters today announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing over \$12 million in water and wastewater infrastructure in Dunnellon, Florida.

“This Water and wastewater infrastructure project will greatly improve the quality of life for Dunnellon residents,” Gruters said. “By partnering in these types of critical projects, USDA is ensuring that rural communities have the dependable infrastructure they need to flourish.”

This Rural Development investment, awarded to Florida Governmental Utility Authority, will be used to purchase the city of Dunnellon's water and wastewater systems. The water and wastewater systems serve the City of Dunnellon and the surrounding unincorporated areas known as Rainbow Springs, Rio Vista and Juliette Falls. This project will benefit 7,106 residents. Currently, the user rates for these systems are among the highest in the area, yet the systems are still financially and operationally stressed, facing infrastructure challenges and near-term regulatory burdens. By funding this utility purchase, user rates will stay at more affordable levels and will allow the Authority to complete system improvements that will help protect the quality of valuable natural resources.

“Living on the Rainbow River for the first 15 years of my life, I know firsthand the pristine beauty Dunnellon offers,” Gruters said. “We must do everything possible to protect our natural resources and I am proud to announce USDA’s dedication to support rural infrastructure.”

The recently enacted Fiscal Year (FY) 2018 Omnibus spending bill includes a significant boost in financial support for water and wastewater projects. It provides \$5.2 billion for USDA loans and grants, up from \$1.2 billion in FY 2017. It also directs Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue to make investments in rural communities with the greatest infrastructure needs.

In addition to funding in the 2018 Omnibus bill, President Trump has proposed a \$200 billion infrastructure investment that allocates 25 percent (\$50 billion) to rural projects.

The loans and grants announced today are being awarded through USDA’s [Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant](#) program. The funds can be used to finance drinking water, storm water drainage and waste disposal systems for rural communities with 10,000 or fewer residents.

In April 2017, President Donald J. Trump established the Interagency Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity to identify legislative, regulatory and policy changes that could promote agriculture and prosperity in rural communities. In January 2018, Secretary Perdue presented the Task Force's findings to President Trump. These findings included 31 recommendations to align the federal government with state, local and tribal governments to take advantage of opportunities that exist in rural America. Increasing investments in rural infrastructure is a key recommendation of the task force.

To view the report in its entirety, please view the [Report to the President of the United States from the Task Force on Agriculture and Rural Prosperity](#) (PDF, 5.4 MB). In addition, to view the categories of the recommendations, please view the [Rural Prosperity infographic](#) (PDF, 190 KB).

USDA Rural Development provides loans and grants to help expand economic opportunities and create jobs in rural areas. This assistance supports infrastructure improvements; business development; housing; community services such as schools, public safety and health care; and high-speed internet access in rural areas. For more information, visit www.rd.usda.gov.

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