

Ohio

Water and Environmental Programs | Water and Waste Disposal Loans and Grants

USDA Announces Funding to Expand SW Ohio Treatment Plant



Representatives from the Western Water Company and USDA Rural Development met in Morrow, Ohio, Apr. 25 to celebrate Western's \$7.5 million Water and Waste Disposal Loan to expand its water treatment plant. USDA Photo.

Springtime in rural Ohio is marked by sunny days and a palpable sense of hope and renewal.

Recently, representatives from Western Water Company and USDA Rural Development met in Morrow to celebrate a \$7.5 million USDA loan awarded to fund expansion of a water treatment facility that provides clean, safe drinking water to nearly 50,000 rural residents in southwestern Ohio.

Started in 1976, Western Water Company, a non-profit, customer owned system, provides service in parts of four southwestern Ohio counties – Brown, Clermont, Clinton, and Warren. Within its 400 square mile service area, the non-profit delivers water to 24 townships through almost 1,000 miles of pipe.

According to General Manager Scott Kirk, Western Water Company has been working with USDA since its beginning.

“The whole reason we started was to get safe drinking water to rural areas. Getting water to people who need it is very rewarding,” said Scott. “USDA has been a partner from day one, and without the programs they offer, we might not even exist today.”

This loan is from USDA Rural Development’s Water and Waste Disposal Loan and Grant program which provides funding for clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and storm water drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas.

Western Water Company’s planned facility expansion is a proactive measure to ensure it remains compliant with recently updated Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) requirements for polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, removal from the water supply.

These chemicals have been used widely in industry and consumer products since the 1940s. Reducing exposure to PFAS mitigates potential health concerns and ensures healthier communities for this and future generations.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Currently, the facility in Morrow has an on-site water storage capacity of two million gallons. With additional storage tanks scattered throughout the service area and water moving through the system, its total capacity approaches eight million gallons of treated water at any one time.

Its water source is the Little Miami Aquifer, which includes one well field with eight wells, but, according to Scott, “We are always looking for new well fields to increase capacity to provide water. The challenge is finding a well field with volume to meet the needs of customers.”

“Water has become a budget item with families,” he said. “We need to find ways to provide services while maintaining reasonable and affordable rates.”

The planned expansion is expedited to begin in 2025 and be completed some time in 2026, leaving sufficient time to meet the EPA requirement.

Obligations: \$7,500,000 Loan

Obligation Dates: April 10, 2023

Congressional: U.S. Reps. Greg Landsman (OH-01); Brad Wenstrup (OH-02); U.S. Sens. Sherrod Brown and J.D. Vance

Impact: Add a critical step to treatment process that mitigates PFAS contaminants in water supplied to nearly 50,000 rural residents in southwestern Ohio.