

# U.S. Senate restores funds for NAWS

Funding for project restored to its original level for fiscal year 2004

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The full U.S. Senate has approved restoration of funding for the Northwest Area Water Supply project to its original level for fiscal year 2004.

Sens. Byron Dorgan and Kent Conrad, both D-N.D., announced the Senate's approval Wednesday.

The amount earmarked for NAWS in the president's budget, \$17.3 million, would have "effectively zeroed out funding for NAWS," Dorgan and Conrad said.

The Senate approved \$28.3 million for the Dakota Water Resources Act, that includes NAWS for Minot and other areas.



Dorgan



Conrad

Minot City Manager David Waind said Wednesday he was "pleased and excited" by the news. Waind said restoration of the funding was critical to the project.

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"Now we can continue working on NAWS with the State Water Commission," he said.

The senators said the amount of funding contained in the president's budget would have significantly under-funded or even deleted all funding entirely for some of the major water projects in North Dakota. In all, the Senate approved about \$72.7 million in funding for North Dakota water projects.

Dorgan is a senior member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, which restored the funds in the Energy and Water Appropriations Bill.

"These projects are key to water supply, flood control, agriculture and economic development throughout North Dakota," the senators said.

"The president's plan to end or severely cut back funding in the middle of these projects would have been a big mistake. Last night's (Tuesday) action by the full Senate is a major step forward making sure that these projects will receive the funds they need to bring the results they promise."

The NAWS project has progressed steadily this season. The second phase of construction from about 7 1/2 miles south of Minot to N.D. Highway 23, about nine miles, is expected to be wrapped up soon. The first phase, from the Minot Water Treatment Plant to 7 1/2 miles south of Minot was completed

during the 2002 construction season.

The \$145-million project is designed to provide drinking water to more than 63,000 residents in northwest North Dakota.

Once the project is complete, water will be pumped from Lake Sakakawea to Minot where it will be treated and piped to several other communities. Minot isn't expected to receive water from the big lake until about 2007.

The state is currently awaiting a federal judge's decision on a lawsuit filed by the province of Manitoba asking that the NAWS project be stopped until environmental concerns have been adequately addressed.

Manitoba sued the U.S. Department of the Interior and Bureau of Reclamation in October 2002 to stop the project they contend will result in harmful biota from the Missouri River system being transferred into the Hudson Bay basin.

NAWS supporters believe they have adequately addressed those concerns by the treatment the water will receive. It will be chlorinated immediately after it's pumped out of the lake and will also be fully treated in Minot, including being sent through ultra-violet light to kill microorganisms.

On Aug. 26, Manitoba's lawsuit received a hearing in U.S. District Court in Washington. Judge Rosemary Collyer has taken the case under advisement and didn't say when she will decide whether the case will proceed.