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EPA Announces \$56 Million WIFIA Loan to Upgrade Water Infrastructure for the Gun Lake Tribe in Western Michigan

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Contact Information

EPA Press Office (press@epa.gov)

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced a \$56 million Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) loan to the Match-E-Be-Nash-She-Wish Band of Pottawatomis Indians' Utility Authority, also known as the Gun Lake Tribal Utility Authority. This is the WIFIA program's first loan to a tribal borrower. EPA's WIFIA financing will support upgrades to the tribe's drinking water and wastewater systems to support a healthy community and economic opportunity.

“Congratulations to the Gun Lake Tribe for securing the first WIFIA loan to a tribal nation and the first loan to finance 80 percent of project costs! This investment provides a foundation of safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater management that will support residents, businesses, and the environment,” **said EPA Assistant Administrator for Water Radhika Fox**. “Through President Biden's Investing in America Agenda, EPA is delivering the benefits of water infrastructure to communities across the country—especially disadvantaged communities. In addition to WIFIA, EPA is investing \$50 billion under the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, with much of this funding dedicated to projects in disadvantaged and historically underserved communities.”

With EPA's WIFIA financing, the Gun Lake Tribal Utility Authority will improve and expand the drinking water and wastewater systems to meet the needs of its customers now and in the future. The project includes design and construction of a new wastewater treatment plant, new drinking water treatment plant, groundwater wells, and an elevated water storage tank. Water meters will be installed to improve

water loss monitoring. This updated infrastructure will provide a reliable and safe drinking water supply, protect nearby waterways, and support community economic development.

“The Gun Lake Tribe appreciates the EPA’s WIFIA Program for assisting us with financing our water infrastructure project,” **said Tribal Chairman Bob Peters**. “This will support our new hotel and indoor pool oasis currently being built, which will turn the Gun Lake Casino into a world-class destination resort. It also is a critical first step in our effort to develop our Tribal homelands, along US 131 here in West Michigan, into a thriving community. This will help diversify the Tribal economy, create many more jobs locally, and create an eternal legacy for future generations of Gun Lake Tribal Citizens. It is an honor for the Gun Lake Tribe to be the first to receive this funding, and we hope that our efforts will pave the way for other Tribes to benefit from this outstanding program.”

Gun Lake Tribal Utility Authority is the first WIFIA borrower to receive financing for 80 percent of its project costs, a flexibility offered to small community borrowers. By financing with this WIFIA loan, the authority will save \$25 million. Project construction and operation are estimated to create more than 600 jobs.

EPA’s WIFIA loan also aligns with the agency’s commitments to investing in water infrastructure outlined in the agency’s 2021 action plan, [*Strengthening the Nation-to-Nation Relationship with Tribes to Secure a Sustainable Water Future*](#).

Learn more about [EPA’s WIFIA Program](#) and water infrastructure investments under the [Bipartisan Infrastructure Law](#).

Background

Established by the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act of 2014, the [WIFIA program](#) is a federal loan program administered by EPA. The WIFIA program’s aim is to accelerate investment in the nation’s water infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance for regionally and nationally significant projects. The WIFIA program has an active pipeline of pending applications for projects that will result in billions of dollars in water infrastructure investment and thousands of jobs. Since its creation, EPA’s WIFIA program has announced \$19 billion in financing to support more than 110 projects that are strengthening drinking water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure while creating over 135,000 jobs.

EPA recently made the 7th round of WIFIA financing available and is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA loans. \$6.5 billion is available through WIFIA, and \$1 billion is available through SWIFIA, which is a loan program exclusively for State infrastructure financing authority borrowers. EPA is currently accepting letters of interest for WIFIA and SWIFIA loans. Learn more about [submitting a letter of interest for a WIFIA loan](#).

In addition to WIFIA loans, there are many federal funding resources available for communities and utilities to improve vital water and wastewater resources. President Biden’s Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a once-in-a-generation investment in our nation’s infrastructure and competitiveness. The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law provides a historic \$50 billion investment in upgrading critical water, wastewater, and stormwater infrastructure.

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