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Sewer interceptor's use of loan fund is clean as can be

State and local officials refute contrary claims



By Candace Romano
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Franklin - The state followed the "necessary procedures and rules" when it decided the Ryan Road interceptor project could receive Clean Water Fund dollars, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA, in identical letters to two Ryan Road residents, said the Department of Natural Resources applies a "rigorous evaluation of projects, and provides an environmental review, including agricultural impacts."

Further, the federal agency said that while it provides the funds and national oversight of the Clean Water Fund, each state is responsible for managing the low-interest loan program and determining what wastewater projects are worthy.

Those letters, sent in late December, were to Susanne Mayer, 9733 W. Ryan Road, and John Napientik, 10777 W. Ryan Road, in response to their requests for federal review of the project. Neither returned calls seeking comment.

However, it was not the first time the issue of whether the Clean Water Fund could be used for the interceptor project was raised.

A vocal opponent of the interceptor, Milwaukee County Supervisor John Weishan Jr. told Franklin NOW in December that he believed the interceptor project was not qualified for a Clean Water Fund loan because the fund was not to be used to further development of an area.

Under the plan, sewer would be extended along five miles of farmland on Ryan Road from 60th to 124th streets. It would serve a nine-mile area south of Ryan Road and west of South 68th Street.

At that time Weishan made his remarks, Mayor Tom Taylor said neither the DNR nor the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission questioned whether that fund could be tapped for the \$31 million project. He reiterated that this week.

"I'm sure that there's going to be people who don't like anything that's connected to the Ryan Road Interceptor," he said. "We understand that. But we did everything we were instructed to do."

Construction has already begun, with completion expected in 2014. The following year, the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District will begin buying back the interceptor, which will provide sewer service to part of Muskego, from Franklin for \$41 million.

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