



Milwaukee County

Legislation Text

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From the Director, Department of Transportation and Public Works, requesting authorization to have the Architectural, Engineering and Environmental Services Division apply for and accept Urban Non-Point Source and Storm Water (UNPS & SW) Program planning grants for fiscal year 2012, contingent upon the required match funding being provided by the Menomonee River Group (MRG) or the Southeastern Wisconsin Watersheds Trust, Inc. (SWWT).

POLICY

The DTPW Director is requesting authorization to have the Department of Transportation and Public Works-Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services Division apply for and accept UNPS&SW Program Planning grants offered by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources in fiscal year 2012.

BACKGROUND

Milwaukee County was issued a storm water permit from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WIDNR) in 2006. The permit requires that the County develop and implement a public involvement and participation program intended to increase awareness of storm water pollution impacts on surface waters and to encourage changes in citizen behavior to reduce impacts.

Other municipalities in the region have similar requirements, and some have banded together to improve the effectiveness of their limited resources. Certain non-profit organizations in the region also share similar goals of improving awareness about the adverse impacts from storm water, such as the Southeastern Wisconsin Watershed Trust, Inc. (SWWT). Milwaukee County Department of Transportation & Public Works and County Parks Department staff have worked cooperatively with SWWT in coordinating water pollution control efforts in the region. County staff have also been active in working with the Menomonee River Group (MRG), a partnership of municipal governments active in that watershed. SWWT and MRG are working together with the WIDNR in efforts to increase water quality improvements in the region, including efforts to better coordinate storm water education efforts like those potentially supported by this WIDNR initiative.

WIDNR is making available planning grant funds that can be used for public education and awareness. The WIDNR Urban Non-Point Source & Stormwater Program Planning Grants are offered to Wisconsin counties, cities, towns, and villages as competitive grant process to improve urban water quality by limiting or ending sources of urban nonpoint source pollution, also known as storm water or run-off pollution. As storm water accounts for more than 90% of the pollutant loadings in the rivers and streams of greater Milwaukee, additional improvements

in water quality must include work to reduce this category of pollutants. The Urban Nonpoint Planning Grants allow the WIDNR to reimburse up to 70% of eligible planning activities focused on nonpoint pollution, with WIDNR awards not to exceed \$85,000. Among the eligible activities allowed by the grant are “Public participation, education, and outreach activities.”

As noted, the Urban Non-Point Source & Storm Water Planning Grant funding is available to government entities, but not to non-governmental organizations such as SWWT and MRG.

As an eligible entity, Milwaukee County can apply for this grant and SWWT can perform the public education activities outlined in the proposal scope and strategy, working on behalf of its municipal partners. The cost share required by the WIDNR would be provided by SWWT, using both its own resources, funds raised through SWWTs fundraising efforts, and with funding offered by the other municipal partners working with SWWT. Thus far in 2011, SWWT has already secured stormwater outreach education funding from the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program and Fresh Water Future and has other grant requests pending. Should SWWT be unable to provide the required cost share, DTPW will not accept the grant.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the DTPW Director be authorized to have the Department of Transportation and Public Works-Architecture, Engineering and Environmental Services Division apply for and accept an Urban Non-Point Source & Storm Water Planning Grant for the purposes of public education and outreach on storm water impacts.

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