



## North Windham Sewer Project

### Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Promoting Sustainable Economic Growth

#### Importance

- **RURAL SERVICE CENTER:** North Windham's 302 Corridor is the gateway and service center for the Lakes Region. It is a bustling commercial district along the east shore of Sebago Lake, catering to tourists and surrounding small communities.
- **DRINKING WATER:** Sebago Lake provides clean, safe drinking water to 11 communities in Greater Portland, 1/6 of Maine's population. Buffered by forests, the lake is one of just 50 sources in the nation with water so pure that it does not require filtration.

#### Problem – Contaminants continue to pollute the aquifer, threatening surrounding ponds and lakes, and stifling sustained economic growth

- **POLLUTION:** Increasing nitrate levels have been observed in the underlying aquifer over the past 20 years and is threatening the health of valuable local water resources including Sebago Lake. Efforts over the past 20 years to address wastewater issues in North Windham have been unsuccessful. Meanwhile public health and the environment are threatened. Current levels of nitrates in the groundwater at times have exceeded drinking water standards. Septic System pollution entering the aquifer directly impacts surrounding valuable water resources, and it needs to be addressed before the problem escalates and become irreversible.
- **SUSTAINABLE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:** Further growth of the North Windham downtown commercial zone is stymied because the entire area is served by septic systems.
- **MITIGATION COSTS:** The cost to construct a wastewater treatment system to remove pollution is estimated to be approximately \$46 million. The town has estimated they can afford \$16.7 million through various sources, leaving a shortfall of \$29.3 million.

#### Solution – Build a wastewater treatment system that will protect public health and the environment, and promote sustainable economic growth

- Construct a public wastewater system and remove approximately 100 septic systems which will eliminate 22,000 lbs of nitrogen and 3,000 lbs of phosphorous from being discharged into the North Windham aquifer.
  - Construct over 3-miles of collection and pumping system to connect businesses and residents to the system.
  - Treat wastewater through an advanced micro-filtration system. This innovative system will allow for direct drip dispersal on site and eliminate pollution. This project will be the first of this magnitude in Maine and can be a model for other communities who lack receiving waters.
- A wastewater system will allow for sustainable economic growth.
  - Current businesses will be able to grow and new businesses can be sited without further degrading the aquifer and utilizing valuable real estate for septic systems.
  - The new system will encourage higher density business growth and less sprawl.



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#### Assistance Needed – A locally funded project needing assistance

- The project is estimated to cost approximately \$46 million. The town has estimated it can commit \$16.7 million, leaving additional funding needed of \$29.3 million.
  - The Portland Water District will finance the project through the State Revolving Fund (Principal Forgiveness unknown).
  - Windham will utilize \$15 million from TIF financing to pay debt service.
  - Windham will allocate its \$1.7 million ARPA funds to the project.
  - The Town/District has applied for Cumberland County ARPA funds – Tranche 1 – \$1.2 million (not funded as of 3/14/22).
  - The Town/District will apply for CC ARPA funds for Tranche 2 – \$10 million (application due later this year).

#### **For more information:**

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