



NEWS RELEASE

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**VENEMAN ANNOUNCES OVER \$703 MILLION IN ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES
SIX PROJECTS IN MAINE**

WASHINGTON, D. C. and BANGOR, ME, August 20, 2002 – Secretary Ann M. Veneman today announced \$703 million in economic development projects to strengthen rural communities throughout the United States, as part of the Bush Administration’s ongoing commitment to invest and bolster programs for rural America. The 377 projects being announced in 47 states and Puerto Rico will build and upgrade water and waste disposal facilities and will provide clean drinking water to improve the quality of life for thousands of residents and businesses in rural communities.

“Rural America is an integral part of this nation’s economic fabric and President Bush is committed to programs that create jobs and spur investment and economic growth,” said Veneman. “These projects will provide critical infrastructure funding that will help residents and businesses in rural communities, as well as create jobs and more investment in these areas.”

Veneman made the announcement one week after participating in the President’s Economic Forum in Waco, Texas, where the Administration discussed how to strengthen the nation’s economy and create new jobs to help working families. The projects being announced today will be used to spur economic growth, job creation, and help the environment through the building and upgrading of water and waste disposal facilities throughout the country. These projects are funded through the Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002.

“USDA is working in a swift and thoughtful manner to implement the new Farm Bill,” said Tom Dorr, Under Secretary for Rural Development. “These projects are

“The rapid implementation of the Farm Bill's water and waste projects is a clear example of the Bush Administration's commitment to work with local rural communities to insure that appropriate infrastructure is in place to support the quality of life and economic opportunities that is desired,” said Michael Aube, Maine State Director for Rural Development. “This unprecedented action, combined with Rural Development program funding in fiscal year 2002, will mean safer and cleaning drinking water and economic development opportunities to for over 22 Maine towns.”

In FY 2002, USDA Rural Development in Maine has provided over \$21 million to fund water and waste disposal projects in rural communities.

State Director Aube will be hosting a celebration that highlights the importance of these projects to rural communities. Guest speakers will include: Steve Levy, Executive Director for the Maine Rural Water Association; Wanda Calder, Treasurer of the New Portland Water District; and Tom Todd, Superintendent of the Newport Water District. For more information about these events and a complete list of the individual loan and grant recipients, please call 207-990-9160 or visit USDA's Rural Development website at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/me>.

USDA Rural Development serves as the lead federal entity for rural development needs and administers financial and technical assistance through three agencies: Rural Housing Service, Rural Business-Cooperative Service and Rural Utilities Service.

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