



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
San Juan, PR

NEWS RELEASE

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AGRICULTURE DEPUTY SECRETARY MERRIGAN ANNOUNCES \$154.8 MILLION FOR RURAL WATER PROJECTS (PUERTO RICO RECEIVES \$13,965,642)

WASHINGTON, August 3, 2009 – Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan today announced the selection of \$154.8 million in water and environmental project loans and grants that are being funded immediately through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. (ARRA) The projects will help provide safe drinking water and improved wastewater treatment systems for rural towns and communities in 15 states and Puerto Rico. Altogether, USDA has announced \$1.29 billion for water and environmental project loans and grants, benefiting people throughout the country.

“The 36 Recovery Act water and wastewater projects we are announcing today further the Obama administration’s goal to rebuild and revitalize the nation’s rural infrastructure,” Merrigan said. “These projects will put people to work, improve the health of the families and communities, and make a down payment on a better environment for the future.”

Pedro Gómez, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director for Puerto Rico, indicated that the assistance was granted to the PR Aqueduct and Sewer Authority. Rural Development funds will be used for construction of a new Water Low-Level Dam and the rehabilitation of the of the existing intake box in La Plata Ward in the Municipality of Aibonito. A loan in the amount of \$4,479,000 was approved for this project. The new system will improve the infrastructure and the health of the served communities. This facility will serve 6,506 residential users in several communities. Other projects announced are the construction of Water Distribution System in Adjuntas that will provide water to 2,530 residential users. A loan of \$4,415,000 and a grant \$4,106,000 were approved for the project. Another is the construction of a Rural Aqueduct in La Yuca Sector at Machuelos Ward in Ponce. It will serve a population of 175 residential

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users. RD approved a loan of \$727,000 and a grant of \$238,642 for the project construction which is necessary to provide potable water to this community.

The completion of these projects will allow these systems to be in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and Safe Water Act. The ARRA funding announced today is being administered by USDA Rural Development's Water and Environmental Program which provides loans and grants to ensure that the necessary investments are made in water and wastewater infrastructure to deliver safe and drinking water and protect the environment in rural areas.

President Obama signed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 into law on February 17, 2009. It is designed to jumpstart the nation's economy, create or save millions of jobs and put a down payment on addressing long-neglected challenges so our country can thrive in the 21st century. The Act includes measures to modernize our nation's infrastructure, enhance energy independence, expand educational opportunities, preserve and improve affordable health care, provide tax relief, and protect those in greatest need.

More information about USDA's Recovery Act efforts is available at www.usda.gov/recovery. More information about the Federal government's effort on the Recovery Act is available at www.recovery.gov.

Additional information on the Rural Development's Programs can be obtained by visiting USDA's web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov> or by calling Nereida Rodríguez at (787) 766-5095 X 250 or Miguel A. Ramírez at X 232. USDA Rural Development is committed to the future of rural communities.