



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
San Juan, PR

NEWS RELEASE

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USDA TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL ASSISTENCE FUNDING FOR RURAL WATER PROJECTS

WASHINGTON, May 29, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced that USDA is providing \$14.2 million to help rural communities identify water and wastewater infrastructure needs that can be financed through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

“Technical assistance providers play a critical role helping communities build and repair water systems, Vilsack said. “These projects support Recovery Act goals to rebuild communities, create jobs and make infrastructure improvements.”

The funding will be provided under USDA Rural Development’s Rural Water and Wastewater Circuit Rider Program to enable the National Rural Water Association to add 15 water and 71 wastewater technical assistance staff in 2009 and 2010 to help rural communities throughout the country. These technical assistance staff, known as circuit riders, help rural communities prepares proposals for water and wastewater systems manage construction and ensure that all loan requirements are met.

Pedro Gómez, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director for Puerto Rico, indicated that the first phase of the funding - \$4.1 million – will be for technical assistance services performed between June 1, 2009 and October 31, 2009. The remainder will be used beginning November 1, 2009. In addition to the \$14.2 million, USDA Rural Development anticipates making Recovery Act funds available later in the year through a competitive grant process for further technical assistance services.

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

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Committed to the future of rural communities.

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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.