



United States Department of Agriculture
Rural Development
San Juan, PR

NEWS RELEASE

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AGRICULTURE SECRETARY VILSACK ANNOUNCES \$250 MILLION IN RECOVERY ACT FUNDS FOR RURAL WATER PROJECTS (PUERTO RICO RECEIVES \$6,793,000.00)

WASHINGTON, July 17, 2009 – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced the selection of \$250 million in water and environmental projects that are being funded immediately through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The 32 projects will help provide safe drinking water and improved wastewater treatment systems for rural towns and communities in 17 states, Guam, and Puerto Rico. This is the fifth wave of water and environmental projects that USDA has announced, with total funding of \$1.134 billion.

“Recovery Act projects are putting people to work and helping communities of all sizes build a foundation for economic strength and future prosperity,” said Vilsack. “The water and wastewater projects we’re announcing today are helping to achieve the Obama Administration’s economic recovery goals by rebuilding and revitalize the nation’s infrastructure while creating or retaining jobs.”

USDA Rural Development’s Water and Environmental Program provides loans and grants to ensure that the necessary investments are made in water and wastewater infrastructure to deliver safe drinking water and protect the environmental in rural areas.

Pedro Gómez, USDA Rural Development Acting State Director for Puerto Rico, indicated that Puerto Rico received \$6,793,000.00 in a combination of a loan and grant for the construction of a sanitary sewer system. This project will solve the problems of wastewater disposal for 675 families in the communities of: El Gato, Bajuras, La Loma, and Barros in the municipality of Orocovis communities. It will also eliminate the direct

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and indirect spillover of contaminated effluent from septic tanks in the communities to be served.

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.