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Stimulus money flows to clean water projects

State gets \$121.6 million from Environmental Protection Agency

by Elahe Izadi | Staff Writer



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The Environmental Protection Agency awarded \$121.6 million in federal stimulus money to Maryland to pay for clean water projects.

The money comes from President Barack Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act and will be distributed through the Maryland Department of the Environment. The approved 95 projects are in counties throughout the state and range from storm-water upgrades in Prince George's County to a green roof on a municipal building in Montgomery County to solar panels at a biosolids facility in Talbot.

About \$92 million of the federal money will pay for projects meant to reduce pollution and \$26.4 million will go toward improvements to drinking water treatment, water storage and wells. The MDE will distribute the grant money and low-interest loans in July, and construction has to be complete by the end of the year.

Members of Maryland's congressional delegation praised the EPA award and stimulus package during a news conference Tuesday at Bladensburg Waterfront Park. The park overlooks the Anacostia River, the site of a \$4 million sewer main lining project overseen by the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission.

Officials said the projects will not only improve the state's ailing infrastructure but will also create jobs in Maryland.

"The purpose of that bill was to rebuild this country and put Americans back to work," said U.S. Rep. Christopher Van Hollen (D-Dist. 8) of Kensington.

According to MDE spokeswoman Dawn Stoltzfus, requirements on the stimulus money to award contracts to small, minority or woman-owned businesses are the same as the MDE State Revolving Fund, meaning loan and grant recipients make good-faith efforts to award a fair share of work to small businesses or those that are woman or minority-owned, including reaching out to such businesses and dividing work, when possible, so that more such businesses can be contracted.

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