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The City of Newport is currently in the "Design" step, having received \$873,610 for the preliminary design phase of wastewater treatment plant improvements and \$1,540,000 for design of collection system improvements. In the recent SCPPL 2024 Call for Future Funding, we requested funding for construction of the first phase of collection system improvements in the amount of \$2,388,000 and for the design of the first phase of treatment plant upgrades in the amount of \$920,000. We were disheartened to learn that Newport was not awarded any funds through this SCPPL Call for Future Funding. We recognize the limitation of available funds for the SCPPL program. We plan to continue progressing collection system design to prepare for a request for construction funds in future SCPPL Calls for Future Funding. However, it is very important for the City of Newport to advance the design and construction of the treatment plant improvements. These improvements are essential for system redundancy, capacity and life safety.

Currently, our wastewater treatment plant is in preliminary design, expected to be completed before the end of 2025. In order to be in the best position for seeking construction funding for treatment plant improvements, the transition from preliminary design to final design (in three phases) is critical to continue that momentum. \$920,000 funds for Phase 1 Design for treatment plant improvements are needed as early as November 2025 to be in the best position for construction funding applications in fall 2026 (through SCPPL or competitive WQC Combined Funding application). Future SCPPL requests are anticipated for the other phases of design for improvements at the WWTP.

Without this basic financial assistance, our ability to progress into the improvement phases at the treatment plant will be stalled out, leaving us paying interest on the preliminary design efforts which were needed to establish the priorities for upgrades. A time gap in funding will leave us vulnerable to treatment violations due to capacity issues and exposed to the risk of serious treatment failures which would result from an extended loss of power. Please consider authorizing the request for \$920,000 for Phase 1 Design at the treatment plant, so that we can be in the best position for construction funding requests in Fall 2026. These improvements are essential for wastewater treatment system redundancy, capacity and life safety.