

VICTOR COUNTY WATER & SEWER DISTRICT
P.O. BOX 448
VICTOR, MONTANA 59875-0190

Board Chair: Mr. Tom Cratty 360-8262
General Manager: Mr. Steve Mosbrucker 370-4832 District Office Manager: Ms. Sonja Kearney 642-3638

January 13, 2023

Mr. Mike Hopkins, Chairman
Long Range Planning Subcommittee
P.O. Box 200400
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Representative Hopkins and Long-Range Planning Subcommittee:

The Victor Water and Sewer District has 385 residential sewer services serving approximately 730 people. Originating in the 1970's, the District owns and operates a sewer system in the unincorporated community of Victor located in Ravalli County. With no public water system, the District was formed to protect the sole groundwater source for the community along with protecting aquatic resources of the Bitterroot River. Victor provides opportunities of workforce housing for cities and towns from Missoula to Hamilton and as such resources are generally limited to maintain and improve the sewer system. The District is operated by a single part time operator and part time office manager.

To meet the needs of reducing system excessive inflow/infiltration and protecting the groundwater aquifer and Bitterroot River, Victor is facing a \$1.28 M project that would supplement other planned improvements that are being funded by a separate ARPA project. This specific project in which the District is seeking funding assistance for would allow the District to complete updates necessary to the lagoon treatment system and collection system. The treatment system utilizes two aerated treatment lagoons and a third storage cell that allows for seasonal storage of treated effluent for future irrigation. The lagoon treatment system is relying on original blowers and aeration diffusers. This project would replace the blowers and aeration. Additionally, the second treatment cell would be separated with a baffle curtain enhancing the quality of treatment. With excessive wastewater flows during the summer after local irrigation ditches are filled and groundwater elevations rise, the District needs to complete improvements to the collection system and rehabilitate the only lift station. The existing lift station dates back to the 1970's and requires the part time operator to enter a confined space to trouble shoot and maintain the lift station pumps routinely.

Like other bedroom communities near larger towns and cities in Montana, Victor has recently seen significant demand for expanding services and infill of remaining interior District parcels. A reliable, safe, efficient and affordable sewer collection and treatment system is essential to Victor.

Community members, the District's Board of Directors, operator and manager understand the importance of a fully functional and safe sewer collection and treatment system. This project is understood to be essential in completing a comprehensive approach to modernizing the District's sewer system to meet the current demands and to correct struggles with adequately protecting groundwater and aquatic resources.

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Based on Victor's population of low to moderate income residents, the District cannot afford this project without financial assistance. Without a grant, sewer rates would increase by over 45%. This is not an affordable path for the community.

Thank you for your consideration of this important sewer project for the community of Victor.

Sincerely,



Sonja Kearney
Office Manager
Victor Water and Sewer District