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STATE OF MONTANA

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Whitefish Ratepayers to Save \$120,000 from SRF Program Changes

Helena, Mont. – Governor Steve Bullock today announced that ratepayers in Whitefish will save \$120,000 thanks to changes he made to the State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan program earlier this year. The savings come as part of a \$300,000 SRF loan that was approved to improve the city's wastewater treatment system.

"Through strong fiscal management, and a bit of common sense, we're ensuring ratepayers in Whitefish can keep more money in their pockets," Bullock said of the loan. "We'll continue to work with local communities to find responsible ways to make critical infrastructure improvements, while saving money for Main Street Montana businesses and customers.

The loan will allow the city to make important upgrades to the city's wastewater system, including the installation of nearly 4,000 linear feet of new force main, directing wastewater through a screening facility to allow for a more complete treatment process.

Earlier this year, Bullock reduced the interest rates on loans through the SRF loan program in order to expand local government's access to capital to make important upgrades to local infrastructure, while saving ratepayers money. He reduced long-term interest rates in this program from 3 percent, to 2.5 percent, and reduced construction interest rates from 3 percent to 1.5 percent. In addition, he reduced the amount of financial reserves communities must hold in order to receive a loan, and reduced the debt service coverage communities must have. These changes were made possible through strong fiscal management at the state level and the state's sterling bond rating. In their first year, these reduced rates are expected to provide \$29 million in approved savings for ratepayers.

The changes to the SRF interest rate were made as part of Bullock's Main Street Montana Project. This project is building and implementing a business plan for the state of Montana that helps businesses grow, support job creation, and increase wages. One of the goals of the project is to ensure Montana businesses and communities have an efficient and reliable infrastructure.

The State Revolving Fund loan program, which is administered by DNRC and the Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), enables Montana communities to upgrade or expand critical drinking or wastewater treatment facilities at the lowest possible cost.

For more information on the State Revolving Fund program, contact Anna Miller of DNRC at (406) 444-6689, or visit the Montana DNRC Web site at <http://dnrc.mt.gov/>.

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