

Press Release

Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan, [Senator Tom Carper](#), Break Ground on a Project to Improve [Delaware Water Quality Event](#) Marks Observance of 40th [Earth Day](#)

MILLSBORO, Del., April 23, 2010 -Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan and Senator Tom Carper joined [USDA Rural Development](#) Delaware State Director Jack Tarburton and other officials today to break ground on a project to improve water quality in Delaware's Inland Bays. Construction begins next month on a [wastewater treatment plant expansion](#) project at the Inland Bays [Wastewater Treatment Facility](#). When completed, the increase in treatment capacity will enable over 2,500 onsite [septic systems](#) to be eliminated.

"Since President Obama signed the [American Recovery and Reinvestment Act](#) (Recovery Act) over a year ago, an estimated 1.2 million customers have been notified that they will receive improved water and sanitation services. Almost 650 water improvement projects have been funded in 50 states and territories," said Merrigan. Including the Inland Bays project, almost \$29.7 million in USDA Recovery Act wastewater projects have been funded in [Delaware](#) alone.

The expansion of the [wastewater treatment plant](#) will assist Delaware's Sussex County in serving new customers that are expected to come on line in the spring of 2011. Yesterday, on Earth Day, Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that the project would receive \$10.4 million through the Recovery Act. The remainder of the \$15 million project is being funded with additional [USDA Rural Development funds](#) from its regular yearly allocation, and with funding provided by the [Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control \(DNREC\)](#).

Whiting-Turner Construction has been awarded a contract that will keep many of its employees and subcontractors in the mechanical, electrical and building trades' fields employed during the 16 months it will take to complete the project.

"As we celebrate the 40th anniversary of Earth Day, it is important to remember that there are many aspects to keeping our world clean," said [Senator Carper](#). "A wastewater treatment facility may not be what immediately comes to mind for most of us, but this improved and upgraded facility will play a vital role in ensuring that the water that lands in our water supply and filters into our homes is the cleanest and safest it can be." In a statement, Delaware [Senator Edward Kaufman](#) said, "This is also a wonderful example of how Recovery Act funds are helping Delaware by keeping our residents healthy and also by maintaining and creating jobs."

The \$15 million project is being funded by a \$10.4 million [USDA Rural Development](#) low-interest loan, a \$3 million USDA grant, \$1.3 million grant from DNREC and \$448,619 low-interest loan from DNREC.

Delaware developed an innovative approach to leverage \$19 million of stimulus funding to support \$85 million of clean water projects - more in one year than in the previous lifetime of a program - which could be a national model for other states.

"This project demonstrates how government should work - Federal, State and local governments leveraging their resources to clean up the environment and strengthen our economy at the same time," said [Department of Natural Resources](#) and Environmental Control Secretary Collin O'Mara. "Together, we will improve the water quality of the Inland Bays and create hundreds of well-paying jobs in the process."

"Our years-long partnership with USDA, the Delaware congressional delegation, and the State continues to pay dividends for the environment and for the residents of [Sussex County](#), both now and for generations to come," Sussex County Administrator David B. Baker said. "This latest round of federal and state dollars once again helps the County better serve its wastewater customers with expanded, affordable service, but it does so much more.

"This is an investment in our people today and in the citizens of tomorrow. It provides employment opportunities for our labor force now, when jobs are sorely needed, and it will mean a cleaner, safer and healthier environment for our future," Mr. Baker added. "We very much appreciate this assistance from USDA, DNREC, and the Delaware delegation, and we look forward to that cooperation continuing for many years to come."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life for rural residents. In 2009, the agency provided more than \$132 million to rural Delaware. [USDA Rural Development funds](#) more than 40 programs that support agriculture, business opportunities, home ownership, home repair, rental housing, broadband technology, public safety, health care, education, community facilities such as libraries, schools and day care centers, and energy-related projects. Additional information on rural programs is available by calling their office in [Georgetown](#) at (302) 856-3990, ext. 4 or by visiting www.rurdev.usda.gov.

#

USDA is an [equal opportunity provider](#), employer and lender. To file a complaint of discrimination, write: USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (800) 795-3272 (voice), or (202) 720-6382 (TDD).



Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan throws the largest shovel of dirt at the ground breaking ceremony for the Inland Bays Wastewater Treatment Plant expansion. Pictured left to right: Vance Phillips, President Sussex County Council; Michael Scuse, Deputy Under Secretary Farm and Foreign Agriculture Service; Agriculture Deputy Secretary Kathleen Merrigan; Jack Tarburton, USDA Rural Development State Director; Senator Tom Carper; and Kathy Bunting Howarth, Director Division of Water Resources DNREC.



