



United States Department of Agriculture
Natural Resources Conservation Service

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NEWS RELEASE

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Northborough and Westborough dams to be upgraded with Recovery Act funding

AMHERST, Mass. (April 10, 2009) — Massachusetts is one of 11 states that will receive a share of \$45 million in funding to rehabilitate aging flood control structures nationwide announced recently by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. Funding is provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, and is part of the Obama Administration's plans to modernize the nation's infrastructure, jumpstart the economy and create jobs.

"There are many dams and other important flood control structures across the country that are literally in a race against time when it comes to their ability to protect people and property from flooding," said Vilsack. "This funding is going to projects where there is the greatest risk of infrastructure failure and threat to life and property."

"These projects will not only revitalize dams, they will also revitalize rural economies by creating jobs and supporting local businesses that supply needed products and services," said Vilsack.

USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) will deliver this assistance through its Watershed Rehabilitation Program and direct the funding toward the most cost-effective projects with the greatest need.

Massachusetts will receive \$4.4 million to upgrade the Hop Brook Dam in Northborough and the George H. Nichols Dam in Westborough. Significant upstream urban development has generated the need for rehabilitation of these dams in the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord (SuAsCo) rivers watershed, which were built between 1962 and 1980 by NRCS and the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR).

DCR owns, operates and maintains the dams, and monitors the dams to ensure that they provide flood protection to this continuously growing area west of Boston. As the state sponsor, DCR requested NRCS assistance and will provide 35 percent of the funding for the projects.

"I am delighted the USDA is making excellent use of the federal stimulus funds by investing in dam repair and rehabilitation within my congressional district," said Congressman James McGovern (Massachusetts 3rd congressional district). "Both the Hop Brook and Nichols Dams are critical components of the infrastructure necessary to protect homes and businesses within the Sudbury-Assabet-Concord Watershed from the very real threat of flood damage. For far too long, we have neglected the urgent need for dam repairs as a means of flood control and I'm grateful to the USDA for addressing this problem with these federal stimulus funds."

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"The Hop Brook and Nichols dam projects will generate an estimated 40 jobs," said Christine Clarke, NRCS Massachusetts State Conservationist. "Rehabilitation of the dams will involve widening and armoring the auxiliary spillways to prevent overtopping of the dams and potential breach failure."

"DCR is very pleased that the USDA has recognized the need for these dam repairs and is providing generous funding to make the work possible," said DCR Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr. "We look forward to starting the projects, and ensuring the safety of everyone in the floodplains."

Although the dams are still structurally sound, bringing them up to current performance and safety standards will maintain existing flood control benefits. It will also greatly improve public health and safety by substantially reducing the potential for flood damages to more than 300 homes and businesses and 24 bridges. An estimated 2,040 residents will be directly or indirectly benefitted in the floodplain.

These dams are part of a system of nine dams in the 377 square mile SuAsCo watershed that provide an estimated \$1.7 million in annual flood damage reduction benefits.

For more information on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, visit www.recovery.gov. To learn more about USDA projects underway through the Recovery Act, go to www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome.

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