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Seaboard sewer upgrades scores huge grant

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SEABOARD – Plans for a critical infrastructure upgrade in the town of Seaboard has received another major partner.

Late last week, the U.S. Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration (EDA) awarded a \$992,576 grant to the Town of Seaboard for upgrades to the town's aging wastewater system.

The improvements are needed to support existing businesses, including a major lumber manufacturing facility, West Fraser Timber Ltd. (West Fraser), and to attract new businesses.

This EDA grant is matched with a \$200,000 grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation and additional funding from West Fraser. It leverages \$75 million in private investment and helps retain over 141 jobs.

Seaboard owns and operates an approximately 75-year old sanitary sewer system serving residential, commercial and industrial customers. This EDA funding will be utilized to upgrade Seaboard's wastewater facility, enabling the town to accept discharge from nearby West Fraser. Connecting to the town's wastewater system is a necessary step in West Fraser's implementation of a three-phase expansion program with significant investment and operational improvements to its Northampton County facility, situated on NC 186 east of Seaboard's municipal boundary.

A North Carolina Department of Commerce Utility Fund grant to Northampton County in excess of \$500,000 has funded construction of the new sewer line connecting West Fraser to the town's wastewater facility. This funding will restore the designed capacity volume of the wastewater treatment facility, allowing the town to provide consistent, reliable storage of the waste discharged by West Fraser and to accept additional customers in the future.

West Fraser is an established leader in sustainable forestry, high-efficiency wood product production, and innovation in manufacturing.

Greg Anthony, General Manager of the West Fraser facility in Seaboard, expressed, “our current process of pumping and hauling waste to Roanoke Rapids is not sustainable for the long-term viability and competitiveness of this facility. With this EDA investment, we can now put full trust in the Town of Seaboard’s wastewater facility to sustain our ongoing expansion. West Fraser is proud to invest in our community.”

This funding announcement is the result of a complex regional economic development planning effort led by the Upper Coastal Plain Council of Governments, the Town of Seaboard, and Northampton County.

“The Northampton County Board of Commissioners work hard to preserve our critically important industrial jobs. We are honored that West Fraser is investing in our community and we will continue to actively support their expansion efforts,” stated Commission Chairman Charles Tyner.

To accommodate West Fraser as a new customer, the town of Seaboard will need to treat up to an additional 20,000 gallons per day of wastewater. According to Seaboard Mayor Geraldine Langford, “the Town of Seaboard is excited to welcome West Fraser to our system. This EDA investment will not only retain jobs at West Fraser but will benefit all Seaboard wastewater customers. We will diligently maintain our infrastructure and hope to leverage this investment to attract additional employment opportunities to our town.”