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Contact Person: Ligia Madeira, 508-821-1000

O'CONNELL ANNOUNCES \$190K FIBER GRANT AWARD

Taunton, MA...Today Mayor Shaunna O'Connell announced the City of Taunton received a \$190,000 Community Compact Cabinet Municipal Fiber Grant which will be used to connect one of the City's water towers, located on Kenneth Welch Drive in Lakeville, via fiber to the existing network. This is the only remaining drinking water reservoir that is not connected to the fiber network.

Mayor O'Connell welcomed Lieutenant Governor Karyn Polito and Executive Office of Technology Services and Security Secretary Curtis Wood to Taunton on Thursday, June 2, 2022 to announce the 71 recipients of the Fiber Grant Awards. The City Council Chambers was full as dozens of representatives from various municipalities converged on City Hall to hear the good news.

"We are immensely grateful to the Baker-Polito administration for their ongoing investment in Massachusetts cities and towns. They consistently evaluate the needs of our communities and find ways to help us meet those needs," said Mayor O'Connell.

The Taunton water tower is currently connected using a series of Wifi Hotspots. By extending the fiber loop to include this tower, the Taunton Water distribution network will be more secure and resilient to both cyber and environmental threats. In addition, adding this water tower to the fiber network will allow remote visibility, diagnostics, and analytics of the water levels in the tank.

Michael Arruda, Water Department Superintendent, is looking forward to the improvements that will result from this Fiber Grant, "A fiber line is much more reliable than a series of hotspots. Improving the reliability of the water service network will lead to enhanced levels of service to the ratepayers of the Water District, by allowing real-time adjustments to maintain water pressure and availability. This is great news for our City."

In comparison to the existing hotspot network, a fiber line has a longer useful lifespan and less maintenance, so there will be long-range savings and efficiencies. This project is expected to be completed prior to September 2023.

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