

Combined Notice Finding of No Significant Impact and Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds State of Minnesota

February 11, 2026

City of Erskine
105 Ross Avenue
PO Box 59
Erskine, MN 56535
218-687-4646

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES, GROUPS AND PERSONS:

The purpose of this notice is to identify two separate but related actions to be taken by the City of Erskine (*hereinafter referred to as the Grantee*).

One, the Grantee has made a Finding of No Significant Impact on project activities (see the Finding of No Significant Impact, below) and two, they propose to request the Business and Community Development Division, Small Cities Development Program, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED BCD), to release Federal funds (see Notice of Intent to request Release of Funds, below) under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (PL 98-181) for the following project:

This project will rehabilitate the City of Erskine's existing water tower to improve safety, compliance, and operational efficiency. The water tower currently lacks several features required by OSHA regulations, AWWA standards, and Minnesota Department of Health requirements. In addition, some components are outdated or prone to corrosion, which can lead to increased maintenance costs and reduced reliability. The rehabilitation will include removing obsolete equipment, installing new safety devices, and upgrading access and ventilation features to meet confined space entry standards. The project will also add a new submersible mixer to improve water quality by reducing ice formation in winter and preventing stratification in summer. Additional improvements include replacing gaskets, modifying overflow discharge, upgrading the tank vent and aviation lighting, and installing new manways for better ventilation during maintenance. These upgrades will extend the service life of the water tower, enhance worker safety, and ensure compliance with all applicable health and safety regulations, ultimately providing the City with a safe and reliable water storage facility. The project will utilize an awarded SCDP grant amount of \$600,000.

Finding of No Significant Impact

It has been determined such request for release of funds will not constitute an action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment and the Grantee has decided not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (PL 91-190).

The reasons not to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement are as follows:

Airport Hazards: According to the MNDOT Airport Influence Map, the City of Erskine is not situated within an Airport Influence Area. The nearest airport is Fosston Municipal Airport located approximately 10 miles southeast of the City. The closest military airport is located at Grand Forks AFB, approximately 67 miles northwest of Erskine. The project area is not within a Runway Potential Zone/Clear Zone (RPZ/CZ) or an Accident Potential Zone (APZ).

Coastal Barrier Resources: The project is not located in a Coastal Barrier Resource Service (CBRS) area and has no impact on the CBRS area. The nearest CBRS area is MN-01 located near Duluth and

about 194 miles southeast of Erskine.

Flood Insurance: This project does not involve mortgage insurance, refinance, acquisition, repairs, rehabilitation, or construction of a structure, mobile home, or insurable personal property. This project does not require flood insurance or is excepted from flood insurance. Polk County is listed on the FEMA Communities Participating in the National Flood Program.

Clean Air: The project is not located within a non-attainment area. Air quality currently in the area is considered "Good" with a PM_{2.5}=44. Construction from the project has potential to create minor dust issues. The contract specification will require minimal dust and air impacts.

Coastal Zone Management: The project is not located within a Coastal Zone Management (CZM) area. The only CZM area in Minnesota is located along the coast of Lake Superior in northern Minnesota approximately 180 miles southeast of Erskine.

Contamination and Toxic Substances: A review of the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's (MPCA) What's in My Neighborhood database and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's NEPAAssist tool confirmed that there are no hazardous waste sites or toxic release facilities located on the water tower site. Because all work will be confined to the existing water tower footprint and previously disturbed areas, the project will not encounter or create any impacts related to hazardous waste or toxic substances. In the event that contaminated soil, groundwater, or hazardous materials are encountered during construction, work will cease in the affected area, and appropriate measures will be implemented in accordance with MPCA and EPA regulations. The contractor will be responsible for the proper handling, characterization, and disposal of any hazardous materials in compliance with all applicable federal and state requirements.

Endangered Species: The IPaC identified four species that have the potential to be in the project area; gray wolf (threatened), the monarch butterfly (proposed threatened), Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee (proposed endangered), and the western prairie fringed orchid (threatened). The IPaC also listed the potential for several migratory birds to be present: the bald eagle, bobolink, chimney swift, franklin's gull, leconte's sparrow, northern harrier, and the western grebe. Construction is anticipated to occur in previously disturbed areas. The project will have no effect on the federally listed species due to the nature of the construction. There are no designated critical habitat areas, refuge lands, or fish hatcheries within the vicinity of the project.

Explosive and Flammable Hazards: It is unlikely the project will be working near hazardous operations handling conventional fuels or chemicals of an explosive or flammable nature. The MPCA What's in My Neighborhood website identified areas near the project area that contain above or below ground storage tanks. All work will occur within existing public rights-of-way and previously disturbed areas, reducing the potential for encountering unknown fuel storage systems or flammable materials. Standard construction safety practices and applicable state and federal regulations will be followed to minimize any risk related to fuel handling during construction activities. The project is not expected to pose or encounter any explosive or flammable hazards.

Farmlands Protection: The Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA) does not apply due to the proposed project being within the City limits of Braham. Project construction will occur in the existing road right-of-way and will not convert any agricultural land to a non-agricultural use.

Floodplain Management: According to the FEMA National Flood Hazard Layer, the project area is located in an unmapped zone, meaning FEMA has not assigned a specific flood hazard designation for this location. Additionally, no local sources identified the project area to be in a floodplain. Based on available information, the project is not anticipated to impact any floodplains.

Historic Preservation: A review of the EPA NEPAAssist database and the National Register of Historic

Places (NRHP) confirmed that there are no historic properties within the City of Erskine or in the vicinity of the proposed project area. Therefore, the project will have no effect on historic or cultural resources. The State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) provided a comment letter on December 12, 2025, concurring with a finding of No Historic Properties Affected for the proposed project. A tribal consultation letter was sent to the identified tribes on December 3, 2025 using contacts obtained through the Tribal Directory Assessment Tool (TDAT). Two tribal responses were received during consultation from the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians and the Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe. Neither tribe expressed any concerns regarding the proposed project, and both indicated that the project would not affect historic properties. In the event that any human remains or cultural artifacts are encountered during construction, all work will cease immediately, and the appropriate authorities will be contacted.

Noise Abatement and Control: The project will generate normal construction noise and will be temporary during construction. It is not anticipated that the project will drastically increase the noise to the area. However, if the level of noise that is created by the project exceeds the thresholds allowed by law or becomes a health hazard, steps will be taken to mitigate the noise levels.

Sole Source Aquifer: There are no Sole Source Aquifers (SSA) located within the project area. The only SSA in Minnesota is located approximately 137 miles southeast of the project, near Mille Lacs Lake.

Wetlands Protection: According to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services National Wetlands Inventory, there are no wetlands within or adjacent to the proposed project area. All work will be constructed within the water tower footprint and will occur entirely on previously disturbed land. As a result, the project is not anticipated to affect any wetlands or aquatic resources.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: According to the MNDNR, the U.S. National Park Service, and the Nationwide Rivers Inventory the project area is not near any state or federally protected Wild and Scenic Rivers, study rivers, or Nationwide Rivers.

An Environmental Review Record respecting this project has been made by the Grantee that documents the environmental review of the project and fully sets forth the reasons why such statement is not required. The Environmental Review Record is on file and is available for public examination and copying, upon request, at Erskine City Offices between the hours of 7:00 A.M. and 3:00 P.M. An Environmental Review Record respecting this project has been made by the Grantee that documents the environmental review of the project and fully sets forth the reasons why such statement is not required. The Environmental Review Record is on file and is available for public examination and copying, upon request, at City Hall, 105 Ross Avenue, Erskine, MN 56535 between the hours of 7 AM and 3:00 PM.

Notice of Intent to Request Release of Funds

On or about February 27, 2026 the Grantee will request the Business and Community Development Division, Small Cities Development Program, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED BCD), to release Federal funds under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended (PL 98-181) for the project described above.

Public Comments

All interested agencies, groups and persons disagreeing with this decision are invited to submit written comments for consideration by the Grantee to Erskine City Hall, 105 Ross Avenue, Erskine, MN 56535 on or before February 26, 2026. All comments received will be considered and the Grantee will not request the release of federal funds or take any administrative action on this project before the date specified in the preceding sentence.

In addition, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act, comments on the identification and treatment of historic properties in the project area are welcome.

Environmental Certification

The Grantee will undertake the project described above with Block Grant funds from DEED under Title I of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1974. The Grantee is certifying to DEED that Nate George, in his official capacity as Mayor, consent to accept the jurisdiction of the Federal courts if an action is brought to enforce responsibilities in relation to environmental reviews, decision making and action; and that these responsibilities have been satisfied. The legal effect of the certification is that upon its approval, the Grantee may use Block Grant funds and DEED and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development will have satisfied their responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969.

Objections to State Release of Funds

DEED BCD will accept objections to its approval of the release of funds and acceptance of the certification for a period of fifteen days following the anticipated submission date or its actual receipt of the request, whichever is later, only for one of the following reasons: (a) that the certification was not in fact executed by the Chief Executive Officer or other officer of the Grantee approved by BCD; (b) that the Grantee's ERR for the project indicates omission of a required decision, finding or step applicable to the project in the environmental review process; (c) the Grantee or its agents have incurred costs not authorized at 24 CFR Part 58.22 before approval of a release of funds by BCD; or (d) another Federal agency acting pursuant to 24 CFR Part 1504 has submitted a written finding that the project is unsatisfactory from the standpoint of environmental quality.

Objections must be prepared and submitted in accordance with the required procedure (24 CFR Part 58.76) and may be addressed to Manager, Small Cities Development Program, Business and Community Development Division, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, Great Northern Building, 180 East 5th Street, Suite 1200, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101-1351. Potential objectors should contact DEED BCD at 651-259-7449 to verify the actual last day of the objection period.

Marc Plante, Mayor

(10/2024)