

STATE of MINNESOTA APPROVES FINAL “ADVANCE” to CONNECT WORTHINGTON

For Immediate Release

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Tea, SD – In a special session the Minnesota Legislature early this morning overwhelming approved the Bonding Bill (60-2 in the Senate and 119-11 in the House). Governor Dayton is expected to sign it. The Bonding Bill includes the final “federal funding advance” needed to connect Worthington by the end of 2018.

The state has previously provided advances of \$22M in FY14 and \$19M in FY15. Due to an extremely favorable bidding environment these last two years, there is an estimated \$8M surplus from the \$19M advance. Lewis & Clark was prevented from using the surplus toward construction of the 16.8 miles of pipeline between Adrian and Worthington. The Bonding Bill approved this morning includes language allowing Lewis & Clark to use the surplus toward construction of this segment of pipeline. It also includes a third and final advance of \$3.5M to also be used toward construction of the pipeline.

“It took longer than expected, but we are extremely relieved to get this final piece of the funding puzzle in place so we can finally get Lewis & Clark water to Worthington,” said Worthington Public Utilities Manager and Lewis & Clark Director Scott Hain. “We are incredibly thankful to Governor Dayton and our local legislators – Sen. Bill Weber, Rep. Rod Hamilton and Rep. Joe Schomacker – for their strong support. There were certainly some bumps along the way, but their steadfast commitment these last four years to not stop until the water reaches Worthington was unwavering,” said Hain.

BACKGROUND:

The “federal funding advances” are zero interest unsecured loans that will be paid back with future federal funding after all 20 members are connected, but before system construction is completed. After the 20 members are connected, an estimated \$33M in construction remains to expand the water treatment plant, add more wells and “loop” the system between Sibley and Sheldon. The Lewis & Clark membership has agreed to defer this construction until all three states have been repaid in full. In addition to Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa have approved advances of \$8.7M and \$7M respectively.