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Congress of the United States
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STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN RICK BOUCHER

Groundbreaking for the Josephine Wastewater Project

Norton, Virginia

January 29, 2010

I am pleased to return to the Josephine community today to break ground on a new, federally funded wastewater system which will significantly improve the quality of life for the residents of this community. Today, construction begins on a new wastewater system that will provide public wastewater service for the first time to the nearly 100 homes in the community of Josephine, significantly improving the quality of life in this community and enabling future residential growth.

Safe and reliable wastewater systems are essential to maintaining Southwest Virginia's excellent quality of life and critical to meeting our economic development goals for the region. For these reasons, I work actively with local

governments to secure the funding necessary to construct and improve the region's wastewater infrastructure.

Currently, the residents of Josephine rely on private septic systems, many of which are failing, or straight pipe systems that discharge into streams which are tributaries of the Powell River. The community of Josephine is located within Wise County; however, due to its proximity to the City of Norton, the City has agreed to construct a new wastewater system to serve these homes.

The new sewer system will be completed with the assistance of more than \$1.5 million in federal funding. Of that total amount, the Appalachian Regional Commission has provided a federal grant of \$500,000, and a federal Community Development Block Grant of \$1 million has been provided through the Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development, which administers these federal funds in Virginia. Additionally, Virginia General Assembly has provided an additional \$1,181,900 for the project.

As part of the project, more than 7000 feet of 8-inch wastewater lines will be installed throughout the Josephine community. In addition, a pump station and a portable generator will be installed.

In order to connect the new wastewater system to Norton's existing infrastructure, significant improvements are required to the City's system in the Benges Branch area. To address this problem, 4,414 feet of 8 and 12 inch

wastewater lines will be replaced in this area as part of the project. Not only will the improvements in the Benges Branch area enable the connection to the Josephine community, but these improvements will also enable the City of Norton to address wastewater system deficiencies in this area that have caused flow backups and surcharges into Benges Branch.

As a result of this new wastewater system, more than 100 homes will have public wastewater service for the first time. Aging and failing septic tanks and sewer lines will be replaced with a modern, efficient wastewater system, which will not only significantly improve the quality of life for Josephine residents but also improve the quality of the water of the streams in this community.

There are several individuals who deserve our thanks today for the efforts they have made on behalf of this project.

I want to thank Ernie Ward and Fred Ramey, the Manager and Assistant Manager of the City of Norton. Ernie and Fred spent countless hours obtaining user agreements, surveys and easements in order to secure the funding and bring this project to construction. They deserve our appreciation today for their hard work.

I would also like to thank William Mays, Mayor of Norton, for his efforts on behalf the project.

I also want to thank Skip Skinner and the excellent staff at LENOWISCO Planning District Commission for their continuing efforts on behalf of Southwest Virginia residents.

William Wampler, Terry Kilgore, and Bud Phillips, who represent the Josephine community in the Virginia General Assembly, also deserve our appreciation today for their work to secure the state funds for this project.

I also want to thank Arthur Kilgore, the Pastor of Christian Faith Church where we are gathering today.

Finally, I would like to thank my Project Manager Derek Lyall for his efforts to expand the availability of water and wastewater services across the Congressional District.

The new wastewater system for the community of Josephine is truly an example of what can be accomplished when citizens and government officials on the local, state and federal level work in aid of a common purpose. For that cooperation, I want to thank all of you here today and offer special congratulations to the residents who will soon be receiving new wastewater services.