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Gov. signs bill providing \$21M now for SW ND water projects

BISMARCK — Gov. Jack Dalrymple signed into law House Bill 1269 on Thursday, making \$21 million immediately available for the Southwest Water Pipeline's rural water projects in southwest North Dakota.

Mary Massad, manager and CEO of Southwest Water Authority, said House Bill 1269 is pretty exciting as it will allow for the expansion of water services in the region.

"We're truly excited and it is great news for Southwest Water Authority," she said.

Southwest Water Authority currently serves a population of more than 50,000 people in southwest North Dakota. Massad said the bill will create funding to build a main transmission line to north of Killdeer and will include water reservoirs.

"That will allow Southwest Water to serve more people in places like Belfield, Golden Valley, Dodge and Dunn Center, and will free up capacity in communities west of Dickinson and allow for additional customer sign-ups for water services," Massad said.

"By making this funding immediately available, rural water developers will be prepared to break ground as soon as the construction season begins," Dalrymple said.

Senate Majority Leader Rich Wardner, R-Dickinson, House Majority Leader Al Carlson, R-Fargo, Senate Appropriations Chairman Ray Holmberg, R-Grand Forks, House Appropriations Chairman Jeff Delzer, R-Underwood and the bill's sponsors worked with Dalrymple to get the bill passed with an emergency clause so that the funding is immediately available to complete pre-construction work before the 2013 construction season begins.

"Republicans are committed to being leaders in water and ensuring clean and safe drinking water for all North Dakotans," Wardner said. "HB 1269 is critical for getting quality water to the people of southwestern North Dakota and is just a portion of the Republican's commitment to investing in infrastructure and addressing the oil impacts in our state."