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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**30 Years of Connecticut River Cleanup Celebrated at
Ribbon-Cutting for York Street Pump Station Project**
Ribbon-cutting Marks Completion of \$137M Regional Wastewater Project

The Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (Commission) hosted a ribbon-cutting for its newly completed \$137M [York Street Pump Station and Connecticut River Crossing Project](#) (YSPS) today. The event also celebrated 30 years of regional efforts by the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee (CRCC) to improve the water quality of the Connecticut River. Congressman Richard Neal, Mayor Domenic J. Sarno, EPA Region 1 Deputy Administrator Karen McGuire, Chicopee Mayor John Vieau, and Holyoke Mayor Josh Garcia, among others, were in attendance.

The CRCC formed in 1993 to collaborate on reducing combined sewer overflow (CSO) discharges into the Connecticut River. Since that time, 85 CSOs (63.4%) have been eliminated and flow from remaining CSOs has been reduced by 73.8% in an average year. Holyoke, Chicopee, and the Commission are the current members of the CRCC, which is facilitated by the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC).

The Commission's YSPS project is the latest addition to these ongoing regional CSO reduction efforts and will reduce CSO discharges into the Connecticut River by approximately 100 million gallons in a typical year. The project also replaces undersized and aging infrastructure, increases climate resiliency, and adds redundancy to ensure service reliability for Commission customers. The project broke ground in 2019 and was financed with a \$137,585,000 low-interest loan from the Massachusetts Clean Water Trust State Revolving Fund (SRF). The CRCC helped secure \$3,693,000 in state grants for the project since FY16, and the SRF also provided \$5,639,795 in loan forgiveness. The public is invited to an Open House at the York Street Pump Station this afternoon (11/17) from 2-5 PM. (More information at waterandsewer.org/open-house.)

Prior to the ribbon-cutting, the state delegations representing Chicopee, Holyoke, and Springfield were invited to learn about the progress of the ongoing clean-up of the Connecticut River and discuss upcoming projects and potential funding sources. Though CSO remediation is recognized as a regional issue, funding for CSO projects is still largely provided by local ratepayers, and only supplemented by



Federal earmarks and state funding when available. Since 2018, the state has awarded \$11,453,000 in grants to the three members of CRCC. CSO work under way includes the \$23 million South Fairview Sewer Separation Project in Chicopee and the \$14 million River Terrace Sewer Separation Project in Holyoke.

“I am proud to stand before the newly completed York Street Pump Station, which is a cornerstone project of the Commission’s 30 years of CSO remediation efforts as well as our more recent infrastructure renewal program,” **said Commission Chairwoman Vanessa Otero.** “This project will provide lasting results in terms of increased service reliability and more resilient infrastructure for our customers. It also represents our commitment to deliver projects that maximize ratepayer dollars by addressing multiple issues at once. We look forward to continued collaboration with our partners and state and Federal representatives to find funding sources for the regional CSO issue.”

“Two years ago, we celebrated what was described by many as a once-in-a-generation investment in our region’s infrastructure. Funding from the EPA’s WIFIA program, one of the largest awards in the nation, helped accelerate several clean water initiatives, the York Street Pump Station being one of them. These investments will greatly benefit not only the 250,000 customers who currently rely upon these systems, but also future generations who will rely on them for the next century to come,” **said Congressman Neal.** “I commend Mayor Sarno, along with Springfield Water and Sewer Commission Chairwoman Vanessa Otero and Executive Director Josh Schimmel, for continuing to invest in our region’s drinking water and wastewater systems. As a former Mayor of Springfield, I know firsthand what goes into maintaining our world-class water. Today, we reaffirm our commitment to promoting public health and the health of our environment by ensuring the sustainability and resiliency of our region’s infrastructure.”

“Addressing Combined Sewers is a major issue that requires a lot of hard work and dedication by local communities – no community should have to deal with sewage flooding. EPA understands that this work is especially challenging for communities like Springfield, Holyoke, Chicopee with economic equity and environmental justice concerns. This accomplishment is very significant and we are grateful to have such dedicated partners all working together to achieve a cleaner and healthier Connecticut River,” **said U.S. Environmental Protection Agency New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash.**

Mayor Domenic J. Sarno stated, “The Connecticut River is a defining feature of downtown Springfield, and a regional draw for residents and visitors alike. I commend the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission on the completion of their York Street Pump Station Project, which will support the City of Springfield’s goals to connect residents with their river. I also thank the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee for their three decades of cooperative efforts. The Connecticut River Walk and Bikeway, the new Riverfront Park, the many exciting recreational opportunities at the Pioneer Valley Rowing Club, and the arrival of the Iron Man race are just a few examples of how a cleaner Connecticut River leads to better quality of life and a more vibrant economy for our residents.”



“We are proud of the contribution the City of Chicopee has made towards cleaning up the Chicopee and Connecticut Rivers over the past 30 years,” said **Chicopee Mayor John Vieau**. “Cleaner rivers have provided recreational opportunities, and a new state boat launch to help generate activities and economic vitality. Looking to the work ahead, we are committed to seeking affordable solutions for future projects by maintaining our cooperative partnerships with our neighboring communities and state and federal officials.”

“I am incredibly proud to join Holyoke’s partners in state and federal government, as well as my counterparts in Springfield and Chicopee, to mark the occasion of the Connecticut River Cleanup Committee’s 30th year of effort to address the pollution caused by our legacy combined sewer overflow systems,” said **Holyoke Mayor Joshua A. Garcia**. “This challenge is one shared by all three of Hampden County’s urban core communities and it is only right that we continue to seek solutions together, as one Pioneer Valley region.”

“The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection is proud of its role in advancing projects that reduce CSO discharges, including the new York Street Pump Station,” said **MassDEP Western Region Director Mike Gorksi**. “MassDEP has a longstanding partnership with members of the Connecticut River Clean-up Committee and applauds its efforts to secure low-cost SRF financing and grants to improve the water quality of New England’s longest river. We have come a long way, and remain committed to supporting this regional collaboration into the future.”

“It was big regional thinking 30 years ago that catalyzed the planning commission, Springfield Water and Sewer Commission, and, at the time, six Valley cities and towns to join forces to address a shared problem – legacy combined sewer overflow infrastructure and the impact it was having on our local people and places,” said **PVPC Executive Director Kimberly H. Robinson**. “Today we are here to acknowledge those whose work has contributed to the progress made over the past three decades and to celebrate the major modern accomplishment that is the completion of the York Street Pump Station, all while keeping our eye to the future work left to be done.”

About CSOs

In older cities, combined sewer systems were designed to collect both stormwater from streets and wastewater from buildings into “combined” pipes. When precipitation overwhelms the capacity of these pipes, they are designed to discharge directly into waterways to prevent backups into streets and buildings. In the 1990s EPA adopted new policies to eliminate or reduce CSOs from waterways.

About the CRCC

The Connecticut River Clean-up Committee formed in 1993 through an intergovernmental compact between Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC), Springfield Water and Sewer Commission (SWSC), and 6 municipalities to collaborate on securing funding and advancing CSO projects. Four



original members have since eliminated all of their CSOs. The remaining members are Holyoke, Chicopee, and the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission, which own and maintain the region's oldest and most complex sewer systems.

About the York Street Pump Station and CT River Crossing Project (YSPS)

The YSPS Project replaces a 1938 pump station, increasing pumping capacity from 34 million gallons/day (MGD) to 62 MGD, and adds three new river crossing pipes across the Connecticut River. The new pump station replaces undersized and aging infrastructure and incorporates climate-resilient design to increase service reliability; adds much-needed redundancy to allow for proactive maintenance; and reduces CSO discharges into the Connecticut River by approximately 100 MG in a typical year.

SWSC's Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Renewal Program

The new York Street Pump Station is a cornerstone of more than 20 capitals projects included in the Commission's \$550 million [Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Renewal Program](#) (WWIRP). The WWIRP was initiated in 2021 and includes both drinking water and wastewater projects. The WWIRP is advancing on an accelerated schedule due to the Commission securing a highly competitive, \$250 million low-interest loan from EPA's Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act ([WIFIA](#)) program as well as through competitive financing from the Massachusetts Drinking Water and Clean Water State Revolving Funds (SRF).

More information on the WWIRP and the portfolio of projects is available here:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/5d6420cc44ed477eaaba63d8108f04d4>.

About the Commission

Established in 1996, the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission is an independent, public regional utility. The Commission serves 250,000 customers in the lower Pioneer Valley with safe and reliable drinking water and wastewater service. The Commission provides retail drinking water service to Springfield and Ludlow; regional drinking water treatment to Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, and Southwick; and emergency/peak service to Westfield, West Springfield, Chicopee, and Wilbraham. The Commission provides retail wastewater service to Springfield and regional wastewater treatment to West Springfield, Agawam, Longmeadow, East Longmeadow, Wilbraham, and Ludlow.

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