



GRETCHEN WHITMER  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF  
ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY  
LANSING



DANIEL EICHINGER  
ACTING DIRECTOR

April 28, 2023

TO: All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

SUBJECT: FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
**City of Bessemer, Gogebic County**  
**Drinking Water System Improvements Project**  
**Drinking Water State Revolving Fund Project Number 7608-01**

The purpose of this notice is to seek public input and comment on a preliminary decision by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required to implement recommendations discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment of a water supply project plan submitted by the applicant mentioned above.

#### **HOW WERE ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES CONSIDERED?**

Part 54, Safe Drinking Water Assistance, of the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act, 1994 PA 451, as amended, being Sections 324.5401 to 324.5418 of the Michigan Compiled Laws Annotated, requires EGLE to evaluate all environmental implications of a proposed water supply project. EGLE has done this by incorporating a detailed analysis of the environmental impact of the proposed alternatives in its review and approval process. A project plan was prepared by the applicant and reviewed by the State. EGLE has prepared the attached Environmental Assessment and found that the proposed project does not require the preparation of an EIS.

#### **WHY IS AN EIS NOT REQUIRED?**

Our environmental review concluded that no significant environmental impacts would result from the proposed action. Any adverse impacts have either been eliminated by changes in the project plan or will be reduced by the implementation of the mitigative measures discussed in the attached Environmental Assessment.

#### **HOW DO I GET MORE INFORMATION?**

A map depicting the location of the proposed project is attached. This information is also available on our website at [Michigan.gov/DWSRF](https://Michigan.gov/DWSRF) under "Related Links." The Environmental Assessment presents additional information on the project, alternatives that were considered, impacts of the proposed action, and the basis for our decision. Further information can be obtained by calling or writing one of the contact people listed below.

## HOW DO I SUBMIT COMMENTS?

Any comments supporting or disagreeing with this preliminary decision should be submitted to me at EGLE, Constitution Hall, P.O. Box 30457, Lansing, Michigan 48909-7957. We will not take any action on this project plan for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice in order to receive and consider any comments.

## WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. The applicant will then be eligible to receive loan assistance from this Agency to construct the proposed project.

Any information you feel should be considered by EGLE should be brought to our attention. If you have any questions, please contact Ms. Angela Yu, the project manager, at 517-599-5487, by email at [YuA@michigan.gov](mailto:YuA@michigan.gov), or you may contact me. Your interest in this process and the environment is appreciated.

Sincerely,

*Dan Beauchamp*

Dan Beauchamp, Section Manager  
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section  
Finance Division  
517-284-5433

Attachment

**DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT, GREAT LAKES, AND ENERGY**  
**Drinking Water State Revolving Fund**  
**City of Bessemer, Gogebic County**  
**Environmental Assessment**  
**April 2023**

**PROJECT IDENTIFICATION**

**Applicant:** City of Bessemer

**Address:** 411 South Sophie Street  
Bessemer, Michigan 49911

**Authorized Representative:** Jennifer Adams, City Manager

**Project Number:** 7608-01

**PROJECT SUMMARY**

The City of Bessemer (Bessemer) is in Gogebic County, on the western tip of the Upper Peninsula. According to the 2020 U.S. Census, the population of Bessemer was 1,805. While the population in Bessemer and countywide have been in a slow decline due to the loss of the mining industry, the population is expected to stabilize for the next 20 years.

Bessemer is applying for a low interest Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) loan administered by the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) for water main, lead service line replacement (LSLR), and storage tank upgrades. The total estimated project cost is \$2,000,000. Bessemer has qualified for an American Rescue Plan (ARP) grant for up to 50 percent of the total project cost, not to exceed \$1,000,000. Bessemer is also eligible to receive Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) LSLR funds through the DWSRF, for a loan amount not to exceed \$510,000, and principal forgiveness up to \$490,000.

The typical residential customer may see up to a \$5.16 monthly water rate increase due to this DWSRF project. However, final user cost impact may be reduced due to the ARP grant and BIL LSLR principal forgiveness. Bessemer will adjust final user cost impact based on the final loan amount received. Project construction is anticipated to begin in summer 2023 and conclude in fall 2024.

**EXISTING SYSTEM AND PROJECT NEED**

The original Bessemer water system was installed during the early to mid-1900s. Bessemer originally supplied customers drinking water from wellfields, but the source wells were decommissioned in 2002. Since then, the Gogebic Range Water Authority (GRWA) supplies drinking water to Bessemer from the GRWA-owned North Bessemer Well Field and Treatment Facility. Drinking water is treated by chlorination before it is stored in the Mt. Joy facility for use in the distribution network. Bessemer does not perform any chlorination, residuals handling, or disposal since it relies on GRWA for drinking water.

Bessemer owns and maintains its water distribution system, which serves 989 users, of which 754 are residential users. Most of the water system in Bessemer is made up of 6-to-12-inch diameter cast iron and ductile iron pipe. Older cast iron water mains still exist in the system and are known to have non-working valves. Also present in the system are undersized mains, with

diameters under 4-inches. Since 1980, over 75 percent of the distribution system has been replaced.

Bessemer has also been replacing lead service lines (LSLs) throughout the service area. In 2018, Michigan's Lead and Copper Rule (LCR) was revised. The LCR requires replacement of all LSLs and galvanized lines that either currently or historically have been connected to lead, on both private and public property as they pose a health threat. Bessemer has been identifying LSLs since 2017 and continues to replace LSLs as they are identified. A small percentage of the system still has LSLs and Bessemer continues to identify and remove LSLs from the system.

The Bessemer water system includes two storage facilities and a booster pump station. Rock Bluff Reservoir is a 1.2-million-gallon reservoir that was mined out of a bluff and constructed in 1938. The reservoir is in the northern part of Bessemer. While the reservoir is still in use, Bessemer has considered purchasing a new storage tank instead of using the Rock Bluff Reservoir. Tourist Park Booster Pump Station and Tilden Tank were installed in 1987 and primarily supply water to customers who live at higher elevations in the southern part of Bessemer. Tilden Tank standpipe is a 62,000-gallon enameled steel storage tank. A 2017 inspection report identified several structural and painting repairs to the pump station. The pump station is currently undergoing upgrades.

A Water System Sanitary Survey was recently completed in 2021 on the Bessemer water system. The survey results identified improvements to the reservoir and storage tank. According to the survey, the Bluff Reservoir needs new vents. The existing vents at the reservoir do not meet current 10 State Standards as the vents are too low and provide a pathway for contamination.

The survey also identified improvements to the Tilden Tank standpipe. The standpipe currently does not meet 10 State Standards as the vent does not have an automatically resetting pressure-vacuum relief mechanism. A pressure-vacuum relief mechanism on the vent prevents pressure build-up in the tank, which if not addressed, could cause tank failure. The Tilden Tank roof was also identified as in need of replacement. The existing roof has deteriorated to the point that it is susceptible to failure. Roof failure can lead to potential drinking water contamination.

## **PROPOSED PROJECT**

### **A. Alternatives Considered**

#### No-action Alternative

The no action alternative would result in continuing public health risks from lead impacted service lines and storage facility deficiencies. Bessemer would also not meet the requirements of Michigan's LCR or 10 States Standards if no action was taken. Therefore, this alternative was not considered further.

#### Regional Alternative

The issues impacting Bessemer are specific to the presence of LSLs and deficiencies at the storage facilities, so there is no regional solution. Additionally, Bessemer is currently part of a regionalized system, the GRWA. As such, this alternative was not considered.

#### Optimum Performance of Existing Facilities

Bessemer and GRWA are investing in optimization of the water system. However, in the case of LSLs and storage facilities, optimization will not address these issues. Therefore, it was not considered further.

### Replacement of Water Mains and LSLs

In the case of lead or lead impacted services, there is no feasible option to protect public health except replacement of the entire service line. While filters and bottled water may be utilized in the short term, this is not a long-term solution. Therefore, the only viable alternative to address LSLs is replacement of service lines.

Four homes on Osmose Road in the southern part of Bessemer are currently served by a 2-inch diameter water main. This water main currently dead-ends approximately 940 feet south of East Colby Street. Water main replacement is also proposed on East Colby Street as the current main is a 2-inch diameter galvanized line and serves three homes. Bessemer proposes replacing both water mains with an 8-inch diameter ductile iron main and connecting existing customers with new service lines. Bessemer also proposes adding a hydrant on each street where water main replacement is occurring to maintain water quality through flushing.

### Storage Tank Upgrades

This alternative involves completing repairs and replacement to both the Rock Bluff Reservoir and Tilden Tank. Bessemer proposes a full roof replacement on Tilden Tank due to significant deterioration and to prevent potential roof failure. Additionally, Bessemer plans to replace the existing vent and add a pressure-vacuum reducing mechanism to the new vent. This would address potential tank pressure issues. At the Rock Bluff Reservoir, Bessemer proposes to replace the vent and increase its height to prevent potential contamination issues. Both tank upgrades associated with this alternative would allow Bessemer to meet 10 State Standards, address needs outlined in EGGLE's Water System Sanitary Sewer Survey and prevent potential contamination and structural issues. Because of this, Bessemer considered this alternative further.

## **B. Proposed Project and Estimated Cost**

Based on the requirements of Michigan's LCR, the only feasible alternative to lead impacted service lines is to completely replace all lead or galvanized water services. Bessemer anticipates completing up to 100 LSLRs as part of this project. Bessemer will contact residents to arrange for the full length LSLR as they are discovered. Bessemer has sent out mailers to notify residents about LSL inspections and the proposed project. Determination of LSLR locations is ongoing. Once the presence of an LSL is verified, impacted residents will be contacted to schedule the LSLR. Replacement will occur on both publicly- and privately-owned sides as partial replacements are prohibited by the LCR. Open cut methods will likely be used to remove and replace the LSLs with type-K copper lines.

Bessemer is also proposing to replace water mains on Osmose Road and East Colby Street. Approximately 1,240 linear feet of 2-inch diameter water main will be replaced with 8-inch diameter ductile iron. In addition to water main replacement, seven homes will be reconnected to the new water mains with type-K copper service lines. Two hydrants will also be installed during water main replacement: one on Osmose Road and the second on East Colby Street.

In addition to water main replacement and LSLR, Bessemer also intends to complete upgrades at the Rock Bluff Reservoir and Tilden Tank. Bessemer will replace vents at both storage facilities. Bessemer will also replace the roof on the Tilden Tank standpipe.

The total estimated project cost for LSLR, water main replacement, and tank improvements is \$2,000,000. Bessemer anticipates receiving up to \$1,000,000 in the form of an ARP grant for the project and a DWSRF loan of \$1,000,000 with \$490,000 of that in principal forgiveness.

## **POTENTIAL PROJECT IMPACTS**

### **A. Water Quality Impacts**

The proposed project is not anticipated to have any impacts to groundwater and other state-regulated water resources, such as inland lakes and streams, or wetlands. Wetlands are present throughout Bessemer, though it is not anticipated that there will be any construction on or near wetlands as part of this project. Construction is also not expected to take place in any designated floodplains. The LSLR, water main replacement, and tank upgrades are occurring within previously disturbed areas or in developed rights-of-way. Construction impacts to water quality (e.g., from soil disturbance) will be controlled through best management practices. The proposed project will replace LSLs and undersized water mains, while also addressing deficiencies at storage tank facilities. This protects the public by removing potential sources of drinking water contamination.

### **B. Construction Impacts**

Water main replacement and LSLR work will occur on previously disturbed rights-of-way or private property. The storage tank upgrades will be occurring in the existing facilities, which are also located in previously disturbed areas. These areas will be impacted by the construction activity and mitigation measures will be taken, as described below. However, impacts of construction activities associated with the project are considered short-term disruptions that, for the most part, will not extend past the construction period. Short-term adverse impacts associated with construction include noise, dust, exhaust fumes, removal of groundcover, and increased erosion potential. Construction contract provisions will outline requirements to comply with the Soil Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act. Mitigation measures will be taken to prevent damage to surrounding areas from soil erosion, dust, and sedimentation. At a minimum, silt fencing will be installed along the perimeter of the work site.

Federal crosscutting agencies have been contacted to review the potential environmental, historical, or cultural impacts due to the project. Responses have not been received yet (must be prior to start of construction) from the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and Michigan Natural Features Inventory (MNFI). However, SHPO and MNFI reviews were previously completed for Bessemer, but not specifically for the East Colby Street and Osmose Road water main and Rock Bluff Reservoir projects. EGLE anticipates issuing an update to this Environmental Assessment when the current reviews are completed by SHPO and MNFI.

A previous historical and cultural review of areas completed by SHPO in Bessemer determined that no adverse impacts were expected. The proposed project is also expected to have no adverse historical or cultural impacts because work is limited to developed rights-of-way and outside any critical areas. Federally identified tribes in Gogebic County were contacted requesting comments as to any potential impact to tribal historic, religious, or cultural resources. To date, no responses have been received.

A Section 7 review on the United States Fish and Wildlife Service website was completed and resulted in a no-effect determination. The review identified six species that may potentially be affected by the project work: Canada lynx, Gray wolf, Monarch butterfly, Northern long-eared bat, Red knot, and Tricolored bat. Because the project will occur in developed areas and in rights-of-way, the project is not likely to result in incidental take of any federally listed species. The previously completed MNFI review determined that Bessemer is within the migration range of the Northern long-eared bat. Therefore, Bessemer will follow conservation guidelines which require no tree cutting from April 1 through October 14. No mature tree removals are expected, thus impacts to bats are unlikely. Also, within the 1.5-mile buffer of Bessemer there is suitable

habitat for the Gray wolf and the Canadian lynx. The proposed projects are not anticipated to occur within the primary habitat.

### **C. Secondary Impacts**

No significant secondary impacts are anticipated due to this project. Improvements to the drinking water system are associated with the need to address deficiencies, increase the reliability of the system, and improve public health.

### **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

An in-person public hearing on the proposed project plan was held on June 13, 2022, at the Bessemer City Hall. The public hearing was advertised in the *Daily Globe* newspaper on May 13, 2022. A presentation was given on the proposed project plan, including alternatives considered, potential project impacts, and estimated cost. No comments were submitted prior to the public hearing and all questions from the public and Bessemer City Council members were answered during the public hearing. The Bessemer City Council passed a resolution in support of the project plan following the hearing.

### **REASONS FOR CONCLUDING NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS**

The Bessemer drinking water systems improvement project will have no significant adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative impacts on socioeconomic, cultural, or environmental factors. The water quality benefits anticipated from the project are expected to outweigh the short-term adverse impacts. Therefore, a finding of no significant impact has been made.

Questions regarding this Environmental Assessment should be directed to:

Ms. Angela Yu, Project Manager  
Water Infrastructure Funding and Financing Section  
Finance Division  
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy  
P.O. Box 30457  
Lansing, Michigan 48909-4957  
Telephone: 517-599-5487  
E-Mail: [YuA@michigan.gov](mailto:YuA@michigan.gov)

Figure 1: Bessemer Project Area and Tank Locations

