

## State Water Infrastructure Authority

Meeting Date: February 9, 2022

### Agenda Item H

## Award of Training Grants to Distressed Local Government Units from the Viable Utility Reserve

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### Division of Water Infrastructure Staff Report

#### **Background**

General Statute 159G-45 requires that each distressed local government unit (LGU) participate in a training and educational program approved by the State Water Infrastructure Authority (Authority) and the Local Government Commission. The training and educational program was approved in July 2021 and includes a Utility Management Best Practices introductory course offered on-demand by the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) for a \$72 registration fee per attendee or in person for free at sites across the state this late winter and early spring.

Whether taking the on-demand or in-person courses, distressed units will incur registration or travel expenses. General Statute 159G-32 specifies the types of grants that the Department is authorized to make from the Viable Utility Reserve (VUR), which includes, *(5) Fund other options deemed feasible which result in local government units generating sufficient revenues to adequately fund management and operations, personnel, appropriate levels of maintenance, and reinvestment that facilitate the provision of reliable water or wastewater services.* Proper training and education of elected representatives and local government staff is key to facilitating the viability of their water and wastewater systems.

#### **Staff Recommendation**

Division staff recommend that the Authority approve \$2,000 training grants from the VUR to each local government unit currently designated as distressed and designated later as distressed through Calendar Year 2025.