

**State Water Infrastructure Authority**  
**Meeting Date – April 16-17, 2024**  
**Agenda Item P**

**Final Priority Rating Systems and Affordability Criteria for Water and Sewer Projects**

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**Division of Water Infrastructure Staff Report**

**Background**

The federal Clean Water Act and federal Safe Drinking Water Act provide states with the broad authority to implement and operate State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan programs, including project funding prioritization. North Carolina General Statute (G.S.) 159G-71 empowers the State Water Infrastructure Authority (Authority) to establish priorities for making loans and grants consistent with federal law.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) requires the Division of Water Infrastructure (Division) to update its Intended Use Plan (IUP) for the Clean Water SRF (CWSRF) and Drinking Water SRF (DWSRF) programs. Included within each program’s IUP is the Priority Rating System (PRS), which establishes the points applied by Division staff when an application for funding is evaluated. The Division proposes the PRS to the USEPA each year in the IUP for each SRF (DWSRF and CWSRF) and submits the IUPs to the USEPA as part of the capitalization grant applications.

These PRSs are currently applied to infrastructure construction projects funded by the SRFs (including the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law SRF Emerging Contaminants [EC]), the State Drinking Water Reserve (SDWR), State Wastewater Reserve (SWWR), and the Viable Utility Reserve. A similar PRS is applied in the Community Development Block Grant-Infrastructure program (CDBG-I).<sup>1</sup> The PRSs include four categories:

1. Category 1 – Project Purpose
2. Category 2 – Project Benefits
3. Category 3 – System Management
4. Category 4 – Affordability

The current PRSs provide a consistent and transparent methodology for prioritization that aligns with the Authority’s Master Plan and statutory requirements. The PRSs support applicants in their continued efforts toward long-term utility viability.

**Scoring of Projects Under Current Priority Rating System Line Items**

Congress appropriated funds to the SRFs in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act of 2021, commonly referred to as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL). The BIL appropriated additional funds for five fiscal years (FY 2022 - FY 2026). Bipartisan Infrastructure Law funds are available to support all eligible SRF projects, as well as funds specifically to support lead service line replacement (LSLR) or to help address emerging contaminants (EC).

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<sup>1</sup> See Agenda Item Q for more information regarding changes to the CDBG-I PRS.

The PRSs as approved by the Authority on July 19, 2023, included new line items (1.J.1 – 1.J.3) and updates to Line Items 2.H.3 and 2.H.4 that provide priority to projects addressing perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) contaminants and allow staff to identify projects eligible for the BIL SRF EC funds. This PRS was also adopted for projects to be funded out of regular SRF funds and all other funding programs.

Projects that address PFAS contaminants currently receive both Project Purpose points as well as Project Benefit points related to the contamination, thereby starting with a much higher score relative to other types of projects, such as replacing aging infrastructure or adding treatment to address other types of contamination. For example, a project to add a new treatment unit to remove high levels of PFOA exceeding the proposed MCL could start off by scoring 20 Line Item 1.J.1 points, ten Line Item 2.H.4 points, and three Line Item 2.I points (total of 33 points to start), whereas a project to replace aged infrastructure starts off by scoring 20 points for Line Items 1.C and 1.C.1. The PRS applies to all funding programs and therefore affects the rankings for all funding programs.

Since the State of North Carolina received BIL SRF funds that are exclusive to specifically address EC projects (the BIL DWSRF-EC and BIL CWSRF-EC funds), staff discussed the potential need for revising the PRSs to rebalance the points and ensure that other types of projects, particularly in drinking water, are not starting with a significant disadvantage in points in receiving the non-EC funds. At the February 2024 Authority meeting, Division staff recommended, and the Authority approved, changes to the scoring of particular line items in the PRSs to reduce points for EC projects. A summary of the recommendations is provided below. These changes allow projects such as replacing aging infrastructure or providing service to disadvantaged communities to start off with approximately the same score as projects specifically addressing PFAS for funding programs that are not EC-specific.

### **Changes to Category 1 – Project Purpose and Category 2 – Project Benefits**

The revised PRS will be applicable for the following funding programs:

- State Revolving Funds
  - CWSRF (Base program)
  - BIL CWSRF-EC (these funds are exclusive to projects addressing PFAS)
  - DWSRF (Base program)
  - BIL DWSRF-EC (these funds are exclusive to projects addressing PFAS)
- State Reserve Program (SDWR and SWWR)
- Viable Utility Reserve (Construction projects only)

As shown in the Drinking Water PRS and the Wastewater PRS tables at the end of this staff report, the revised PRSs reduce Project Purpose priority points for Line Item 1.J.1 from 20 to 12. This is similar to points for Line Item 1.C (Replace/Rehab Infrastructure). Further, points for Line Item 1.J.2 were reduced from 15 to five, and points for Line Item 1.J.3 (EC evaluation/assessment projects) were unchanged at five points.

Project Benefit priority points for Line Item 2.H (Project Addresses Contamination) were changed as follows:

- Reducing Line Item 2.H.4 (Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed MCL or Hazard Index) from ten points to five, and
- Reducing Line Item 2.H.3 (Project addresses any PFAS compounds exceeding 10 ppt or State-established regulatory standards or limits) from five points to two.

Provided all other things being equal, the sum of Line Items 2.H.4 and 2.I will be similar to Line Items 1.C.1/1.D.1, age points for the infrastructure projects.

The combination of changes to Line Items 1.J.1, 1.J.2, 2.H.3 and 2.H.4 will result in scoring projects exclusively focused on addressing PFAS almost the same – or possibly slightly higher – than other types of high priority projects. Most projects addressing PFAS will do so either by installing additional treatment (which gains another three points under Line Item 2.I) or by changing the water source (which could potentially gain five to ten points under Line Item 2.K with an interconnection). Combined with the revised priority points for Line Items 1.J.1 (12 points) and 2.H.4 (five points), a project adding treatment or an interconnection to address PFAS with proposed MCL or Hazard Index exceedances would start off scoring at the same level or slightly higher than a project replacing aging infrastructure (20 points to start).

The proposed changes to the Line Item 1.J points and Line Item 2.H points will not change rankings for projects to be funded from the BIL DWSRF-EC or BIL CWSRF-EC funds, as all projects receiving those funds are scoring these points and will be equally affected by the change in points.

Finally, at the February 2024 Authority meeting, staff proposed reductions to points for Line Items 2.H.1 and 2.H.2 to ten and five, respectively. This change would ensure different contaminants in drinking water receive priority on a comparable scale, similar to the current PRS scale. Addressing contaminants such as Manganese and 1,4 Dioxane is included under Line Item 2.H.2. These proposed changes will continue to keep projects addressing these contaminants scoring at the same priority level as PFAS compounds above proposed MCL or Hazard Index (Line Item 2.H.4) as approved by the Authority in July 2023. However, based on public comments received, staff recommend restoring 2.H.1 priority points back to the original 15 points. Projects addressing acute contamination of a water supply source (Line Item 2.H.1) would continue to score the highest of all other types of contamination (15 points vs. five or two points).

#### **Changes to Category 4 – Affordability**

At the February 2024 Authority meeting, staff did not recommend any changes to prioritization for Categories 3 and 4 of the existing PRSs. However, staff recommended a tactical change for Line Item 4.B (Current Monthly Combined Utility Rates for 5000 Gallons of Usage) to revise specific dollar amounts for monthly bill thresholds (\$79, \$90, \$107, and \$129) to new percentile thresholds. Those dollar thresholds were calculated a few years ago at what were the 50<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup>, 85<sup>th</sup> and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles of monthly water and sewer rates in North Carolina in 2020. The

thresholds in the PRSs have not been updated since then, while monthly water and sewer rates have increased across the state. Staff recommended updating the thresholds using new rates data to ensure that priority is given to utilities that are already charging the highest rates, and doing so on a consistent, recurring basis. Rather than updating the specific dollar thresholds in the PRSs and requiring Authority action each time, staff proposed to change the Line Items 4.B.1 through 4.B.4 thresholds from specific dollar amounts to the percentiles (i.e., 50<sup>th</sup>, 70<sup>th</sup>, 85<sup>th</sup>, and 95<sup>th</sup> percentiles). This would fix the PRSs to those percentile thresholds, allowing staff to update the equivalent dollar thresholds in application materials and guidance on a recurring basis, starting with Fall 2024 application materials. The Authority approved these changes during the February 2024 meeting.

### **Applicability to Equivalent Priority Rating Systems**

The revisions the Authority approved to Line Items 1.J.1, 1.J.2, 2.H.1 – 2.H.4, and 4.B.1 – 4.B.4 in the Priority Rating System for Drinking Water projects and Priority Rating System for Wastewater projects will automatically apply to the same or equivalent line items in the Priority Rating Systems the DWSRF-EC and CWSRF-EC programs and for Line Items 4.B.1 – 4.B.4 for the DWSRF-LSLR PRS.

### **Public Comments and Staff Response**

At the Authority's February 2024 meeting, the Authority approved the Draft PRSs for public review for drinking water and wastewater projects funded by the following programs:

- State Revolving Funds
  - DWSRF (Base program)
  - BIL DWSRF-Emerging Contaminants (BIL DWSRF-EC)
  - BIL DWSRF-Lead Service Line Replacement (BIL DWSRF-LSLR)
  - CWSRF (Base program)
  - BIL CWSRF-Emerging Contaminants (BIL CWSRF-EC)
- State Reserve (SDWR and SWWR)
- Viability Utility Reserve (Construction projects only)

The public comment period on the proposed PRS changes ran from March 1 through April 1, 2024. The following summarizes the comments received, provides staff response to each comment, and includes staff recommendations for action on the PRSs. In summary, Division staff appreciate the comments and recommendations provided. The following comments also apply to the PRSs for BIL Emerging Contaminants funding, and to CDBG-I PRS.<sup>2</sup>

Comment: It is difficult to comment on the proposed PRS without associated Intended Use Plans or guidance to understand eligibility and prioritization of how funding is distributed.

Response: We understand the value of posting both the IUP and PRS for public comment at the same time. At this time, the FY2024 allotments for SRF and BIL funds are not

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<sup>2</sup> Agenda Item Q contains the staff report for the CDBG-I PRS.

available, and therefore the draft IUPs are not ready for public comment. Once the allotments are announced, the draft IUPs will be made available in a separate public comment period. **No action required.**

Comment: With the proposed changes in the PRS, applicants will have to make a decision for a single project to apply for a lower project purpose score (1.J.1) to qualify for grant funding as opposed to selecting the higher scoring project purpose (1.C). For example, a single project could qualify for both 1.C and 1.J.1 line items; the same project/applicant could apply twice for the same project and have 2 separate PRS that score differently in order to be able to qualify for the EC PF funds and also be competitive for loan funding. A potential solution would be to have separate funding buckets identified in the Intended Use Plan for specific project types (emerging contaminants bucket and other eligible projects bucket) to reflect the project-type priorities of the Division of Water Infrastructure and the State Water Infrastructure Authority.

Response: The 1.C and 1.J.1 line items score the same at 12 points. These line items often are combined with other line items for additional points, such as the 1.C.1 line item for eight points in addition to Line Item 1.C, and the 2.H.4 line item for five points in addition to Line Item 1.J.1. These line items are added as applicable to the project. There may be some projects that can claim a different combination of points but only one priority purpose (Category 1) line item will be recognized for each priority score. However, it is the intent of the Division to simplify the application process and have all applicants submit only one application per project and be considered for all applicable funding programs. For a project that qualifies both as an Emerging Contaminants project (with the relevant combination of Line Items 1.J and 2.H) by replacing or rehabilitating infrastructure (with the relevant line item 1.C), the applicant can and should claim all line items in the application (i.e. both 1.C and 1.J, including corresponding narratives describing all requirements and supporting documentation as per the PRS Guidance). The Division will apply the 1.J line item score for prioritization for the Emerging Contaminants funding program, and alternatively apply the 1.C line item score for prioritization for all other funding programs. By doing so, the applicant does not need to choose between the two project purpose line items when applying (they should claim both), provided that the project qualifies and is eligible for both purposes as defined in the Guidance document. Further, the Division may consider separate reserves for different funding needs, which will be addressed in the Intended Use Plan (and its associated public comment period), but this would not affect the Priority Rating System. **No change to the PRS.**

Comment: The proposed changes score critical public health issues less than other general project benefits. For example, Line Item 2.G – Project addresses low pressure receives 10 points which is the same as the new 2.H.1 – Project addresses acute contamination of a water supply source proposed score of 10 points and twice as

much as 2.H.4 – Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed MCL or Hazard Index. It appears, addressing contamination and its direct public health impacts is now a lower priority for the Division of Water Infrastructure based on the proposed priority rating system; and specifically addressing PFAS is a lower priority than other contamination or addressing other “promulgated but not yet effective regulations.”

Response: Addressing public health is embedded throughout the Priority Rating System, not exclusively in the 2.H line item points. Line Item 2.G – Project addresses low pressure – also addresses public health since low pressure could lead to acute contamination of drinking water and boil water advisories. Addressing acute contamination is the higher priority for protecting public health, followed by addressing contamination that is non-acute. To better reflect this, **the Staff recommend restoring Line Item 2.H.1 – Project addresses acute contamination of a water supply source – to 15 points** to raise the project benefit points for related projects. Projects that address contamination that is not acute will score 2 to 5 points in addition to other related project benefits. Projects that directly address PFAS are eligible for Line Items 1.J.1 – 1.J.3 or possibly Line Item 1.C, which, when combined with Line Items 2.H.3 and 2.H.4, provide a high project priority score to address the public health concern. Lastly, in anticipation that proposed Maximum Contaminant Levels (MCL) and/or Hazard Index for PFAS compounds may be promulgated in the coming months, **the Staff recommend including promulgated MCL and Hazard Index to Line Item 2.H.4, i.e. Line Item 2.H.4 is to be labeled “Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed or promulgated MCL or Hazard Index.”**

### **Priority Rating System Changes Based on Public Comments**

Below is a summary of the proposed changes to the drinking water and wastewater PRSs, based upon public comments received.

- Restore Line Item 2.H.1 – Project addresses acute contamination of a water supply source – to 15 points. (Applies to Drinking Water PRS only)
- Include promulgated MCL and Hazard Index to Line Item 2.H.4. With this change, Line Item 2.H.4 is to be labeled “Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed or promulgated MCL or Hazard Index.” (Applies to Drinking Water and Wastewater PRSs)

### **Staff Recommendation**

Division Staff recommend that the Authority approve the PRS as shown in Attachments A, B, and C for the applicable funding programs:

- Attachment A: 2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Drinking Water Projects
  - DWSRF (Base program)
  - State Reserve (Drinking Water construction)
  - Viable Utility Reserve (Drinking Water construction)

- Attachment B: 2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Wastewater Projects
  - CWSRF (Base program)
  - State Reserve (Wastewater Construction projects)
  - Viable Utility Reserve (Wastewater Construction projects)
  
- Attachment C: 2024 PRS for LSLR Projects Eligible for BIL DWSRF-LSLR funds

## Attachment A

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Drinking Water Projects				
<p><b>Instructions:</b> For each line item, mark "X" to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that your narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each Category, provide the total points claimed for each program in the subtotal row for that category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total of Points for All Categories in the last line. Note that some categories have a maximum allowed points that may be less than the total of individual line items.</p>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item†	Category 1 – Project Purpose (Points will be awarded for <u>only one</u> Project Purpose)	Claimed Yes/No	Points
1.A		Project will consolidate a nonviable drinking water or wastewater utility		25
1.B		Project will resolve failed or failing infrastructure issues		22
1.C		Project will rehabilitate or replace infrastructure, including replacement by regionalization projects		12
1.C.1		Treatment units, pumps and/or pump stations to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 20 years old, <b>OR</b> lines, storage tanks, drinking water wells or intake structures to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 40 years old <b>OR</b> lead service lines		8
1.D		Project will expand infrastructure		2
1.D.1		Treatment units, pumps and/or pump stations to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 20 years old, <b>OR</b> lines, storage tanks, drinking water wells or intake structures to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 40 years old		8
1.E		Project will provide service to disadvantaged areas		20
<b>1.F – 1.I</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>1.J</b>		Project addresses PFAS emerging contaminants		
1.J.1	EC	Sole purpose of the project is to address Emerging Contaminants (construction projects) where 100% of the costs are associated with this purpose <b>OR</b>		<del>20</del> 12
1.J.2	EC	At least 75% of the project costs are to address Emerging Contaminants (construction projects) <b>OR</b>		<del>15</del> 5
1.J.3	EC	Sole purpose of the project is to evaluate alternatives to address Emerging Contaminants (may include pilot scale treatment study)		5
<b>Maximum points for Category 1 – Project Purpose</b>				25



2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Drinking Water Projects				
Subtotal claimed for Category 1 – Project Purpose				
Line Item #	EC Line Item†	Category 2 – Project Benefits	Claimed Yes/No	Points
2.A		Reserved for other programs		
2.B		Project provides a specific public health benefit		
2.B.1		Project addresses dry wells or contamination of a drinking water source; or resolves managerial, technical & financial issues		20
2.B.2		Projects that eliminate lead service lines		10
2.C		Reserved for other programs		
2.D		Project addresses promulgated but not yet effective regulations		10
2.E		Project directly addresses enforcement documents		
2.E.1		Project directly addresses an EPA Administrative Order for a local government Applicant located in a Tier 1 county, or addresses an existing or pending SOC, or a DEQ Administrative Order, <b>OR</b>		5
2.E.2		Project directly resolves a Notice of Violation or Notice of Deficiency		3
2.F		Project includes system merger or regionalization		
2.F.1		Project includes system merger <b>OR</b>		10
2.F.2	EC	Project includes system regionalization and/or system partnerships		5
2.G		Project addresses documented low pressure		10
2.H		Project addresses contamination		
2.H.1		Project addresses acute contamination of a water supply source <b>OR</b>		15
2.H.2		Project addresses contamination of a water supply source other than acute <b>OR</b>		<del>10</del> 5
2.H.3	EC	Project addresses any PFAS compounds exceeding 10 ppt or State-established regulatory standards or limits <b>OR</b>		<del>5</del> 2
2.H.4	EC	Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed <b>or</b> promulgated MCL or Hazard Index		<del>10</del> 5
2.I		Project improves treated water quality by adding or upgrading a unit process		3
2.J		Water loss in system to be rehabilitated or replaced is 30% or greater		3
2.K		Project provides a public water system interconnection		

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Drinking Water Projects				
2.K.1		Project creates a new interconnection between systems not previously interconnected <b>OR</b>		10
2.K.2		Project creates an additional or larger interconnection between two systems already interconnected which allows one system's public health water needs to be met during an emergency <b>OR</b>		10
2.K.3		Project creates any other type of interconnection between systems		5
<b>2.L – 2.M</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>2.N</b>		Project provides resiliency for critical system functions		
2.N.1		Project relocates infrastructure from inside the 100-year floodplain to outside the 500-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		8
2.N.2		Project relocates infrastructure from inside the 100-year floodplain to outside the 100-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		5
2.N.3		Project relocates infrastructure from between the 100-year and 500-year floodplains to outside a 500-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		3
2.N.4		Project fortifies or elevates infrastructure within floodplain, <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.5		Project improves ability to assure continued operation during flood events <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.6		Project downsizes infrastructure related to buyouts <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.7		Project provides redundancy/resiliency for critical treatment and/or transmission/distribution system functions including cybersecurity and/or backup electrical power source		3
<b>2.O – 2.S</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>Maximum points for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>				35
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 3 – System Management	Claimed Yes/No	Points
<b>3.A</b>		Capital Planning Activities		
3.A.1	EC	Applicant has implemented an Asset Management Plan as of the date of application <b>OR</b>		10
3.A.2	EC	Applicant has a current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that spans at least 10 years and proposed project is included in the plan		2
<b>3.B</b>	EC	System Operating Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.00 based on a current audit, or is less than 1.00 and unit cost is greater than 2.5% of MHI		5

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Drinking Water Projects				
3.C		Applicant has an approved Source Water Protection Plan and/or a Wellhead Protection Plan		5
3.D		Applicant has implemented a water loss reduction program		5
3.E		Applicant has implemented a water conservation incentive rate structure		3
<b>Maximum points for Category 3 – System Management</b>				15
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 3 – System Management</b>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 4 – Affordability	Claimed Yes/No	Points
4.A		Residential Connections		
4.A.1	EC	Less than 10,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		2
4.A.2	EC	Less than 5,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		4
4.A.3	EC	Less than 1,000 residential connections		8
4.B		Current Monthly Combined Utility Rates at 5,000 Usage		
4.B.1	EC	Greater than <del>\$79</del> the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		4
4.B.2	EC	Greater than <del>\$90</del> the 70 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		6
4.B.3	EC	Greater than <del>\$107</del> the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		8
4.B.4	EC	Greater than <del>\$129</del> the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile		10
4.C		Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators		
4.C.1	EC	3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		3
4.C.2	EC	4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		5
4.C.3	EC	5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		7
4.C.4	EC	Project benefits disadvantaged areas		5
4.D – 4.G		Reserved for other programs		
<b>Maximum points for Category 4 – Affordability</b>				25
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 4 – Affordability<sup>‡</sup></b>				
<b>Total of Points for All Categories</b>				

<sup>†</sup> Only line items marked with “EC” will be used in scoring eligible applications for DWSRF-EC funding. These applications will also be scored using the full PRS for all other drinking water funding sources.

<sup>‡</sup>Local government units under Local Government Commission’s fiscal control that have received an Emergency Operating Grant under NC GS 159G-34.5 in the current or prior fiscal year qualify for the maximum points for Category 4: Affordability.

## Attachment B

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Wastewater Projects				
<p><u>Instructions:</u> For each line item, mark "X" to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that your narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each category, provide the total points claimed for each program in the subtotal row for that category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total of Points for All Categories in the last line. Note that some categories have a maximum allowed points that may be less than the total of individual line items.</p>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 1 – Project Purpose (Points will be awarded for <u>only one</u> Project Purpose)	Claimed Yes/No	Points
1.A		Project will consolidate a nonviable drinking water or wastewater utility		25
1.B		Project will resolve failed or failing infrastructure issues		20
1.C		Project will rehabilitate or replace infrastructure, including replacement by a regionalization project		12
1.C.1		Treatment units, pumps and/or pump stations to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 20 years old, <b>OR</b> lines, or tanks to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 40 years old		8
1.D		Project will expand infrastructure		2
1.D.1		Treatment units, pumps and/or pump stations to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 20 years old, <b>OR</b> lines, storage tanks, drinking water wells or intake structures to be rehabilitated or replaced are greater than 40 years old		8
1.E		Project will provide service to disadvantaged areas		20
1.F		Reserved for other programs		
1.G		Project will provide stream/wetland/buffer restoration		10
1.G.1		Restoration project that includes restoration of a first order stream and includes stormwater infiltration SCMs		5
1.G.2		Restoration project that includes restoration and/or protection of riparian buffers to at least 30 feet on both sides of the stream		5
1.H		Project will provide SCMs to treat existing sources of pollution		10
1.H.1		Project that includes SCMs in series that achieve at least 35% nutrient reduction (both TN and TP) and 85% TSS reduction		10
1.I		Project will provide reclaimed water/usage or rainwater harvesting/usage		10
1.J		Project addresses PFAS emerging contaminants		
1.J.1	EC	Sole purpose of the project is to address Emerging contaminants (Construction projects). 100% of the costs are associated with this purpose <b>OR</b>		<del>20</del> 12
1.J.2	EC	At least 75% of the project is to address Emerging contaminants (Construction projects) <b>OR</b>		<del>15</del> 5

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1.J.3	EC	Sole purpose of the project is to evaluate alternatives to address emerging contaminants (may include pilot scale treatment study)		5
Maximum points for Category 1 – Project Purpose				25
Subtotal claimed for Category 1 – Project Purpose				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 2 – Project Benefits	Claimed Yes/No	Points
<b>2.A – 2.B</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>2.C</b>		Project provides a specific environmental benefit		
2.C.1		Project replaces or repairs certain sewer lines, eliminates failed onsite wastewater system or non-discharge system, or resolves managerial, technical & financial issues		15
2.C.2		Project eliminates malfunctioning onsite wastewater systems		10
<b>2.D</b>		Project addresses promulgated but not yet effective regulations		10
<b>2.E</b>		Project directly addresses enforcement documents		
2.E.1		Project directly addresses an EPA Administrative Order for a local government Applicant located in a Tier 1 county, or addresses an existing or pending SOC, or a DEQ Administrative Order, <b>OR</b>		5
2.E.2		Project directly resolves a Notice of Violation or Notice of Deficiency		3
<b>2.F</b>		Project includes system merger or regionalization		
2.F.1		Project includes system merger <b>OR</b>		10
2.F.2	EC	Project includes system regionalization and/or system partnerships		5
<b>2.G – 2.H.2</b>		Reserved for other programs		
2.H.3	EC	Project addresses any PFAS compounds exceeding 10 ppt or State-established regulatory standards or limits <b>OR</b>		<del>5</del> 2
2.H.4	EC	Project addresses PFAS exceeding proposed <b>or promulgated</b> MCL or Hazard Index		<del>10</del> 5
<b>2.I</b>		Project improves treated water quality by adding or upgrading a unit process		3
<b>2.J – 2.M</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>2.N</b>		Project provides resiliency for critical system functions		
2.N.1		Project relocates infrastructure from inside 100-year floodplain to outside 500-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		8
2.N.2		Project relocates infrastructure out of a 100-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		5
2.N.3		Project relocates infrastructure from between the 100-year and 500-year floodplains to outside the 500-year floodplain <b>OR</b>		3

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Wastewater Projects				
2.N.4		Project fortifies or elevates infrastructure within floodplain <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.5		Project improves ability to assure continued operation during flood events <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.6		Project reduces the size of infrastructure as a result of a buyout or other abrupt loss of population <b>OR</b>		4
2.N.7		Project provides redundancy/resiliency for critical treatment and/or transmission/distribution system functions including cybersecurity and/or backup electrical power source		3
<b>2.O</b>		Project <u>directly benefits</u> subwatersheds that are impaired as noted on the most recent version of the Integrated Report		20
<b>2.P</b>		Project <u>directly benefits</u> specific classified waters		10
<b>2.Q</b>		Project will result in elimination of an NPDES discharge		3
<b>2.R</b>		Primary purpose of the project is to achieve at least 20% reduction in energy use		5
<b>2.S</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>Maximum points for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>				35
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 3 – System Management	Claimed Yes/No	Points
<b>3.A</b>		Capital Planning Activities		
3.A.1	EC	Applicant has implemented an Asset Management Plan as of the date of application <b>OR</b>		10
3.A.2	EC	Applicant has a current Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that spans at least 10 years and proposed project is included in the plan		2
<b>3.B</b>	EC	System Operating Ratio is greater than or equal to 1.00 based on a current audit, or is less than 1.00 and unit cost is greater than 2.5% of MHI		5
<b>3.C – 3.E</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>Maximum points for Category 3 – System Management</b>				15
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 3 – System Management</b>				
Line Item #	EC Line Item <sup>†</sup>	Category 4 – Affordability	Claimed Yes/No	Points
<b>4.A</b>		Residential Connections		
4.A.1	EC	Less than 10,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		2
4.A.2	EC	Less than 5,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		4
4.A.3	EC	Less than 1,000 residential connections		8

2024 PRIORITY RATING SYSTEM for Wastewater Projects				
<b>4.B</b>		Current Monthly Combined Utility Rates at 5,000 Usage		
4.B.1	EC	Greater than <del>\$79</del> the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		4
4.B.2	EC	Greater than <del>\$90</del> the 70 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		6
4.B.3	EC	Greater than <del>\$107</del> the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		8
4.B.4	EC	Greater than <del>\$129</del> the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile		10
<b>4.C</b>		Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators		
4.C.1	EC	3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		3
4.C.2	EC	4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		5
4.C.3	EC	5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		7
4.C.4	EC	Project benefits disadvantaged areas		5
<b>4.D – 4.G</b>		Reserved for other programs		
<b>Maximum points for Category 4 – Affordability</b>				25
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 4 – Affordability<sup>†</sup></b>				
<b>Total of Points for All Categories</b>				

<sup>†</sup> Only line items marked with “EC” will be used in scoring eligible applications for CWSRF-EC funding. These applications will also be scored using the full PRS for all other wastewater funding sources.

<sup>‡</sup>Local government units under Local Government Commission’s fiscal control that have received an Emergency Operating Grant under NC GS 159G-34.5 in the current or prior fiscal year qualify for the maximum points for Category 4: Affordability.

## Attachment C

2024 PRS for LSLR Projects Eligible for BIL DWSRF-LSLR funds			
<p><u>Instructions:</u> For each line item, mark "X" to claim the points for that line item. Be sure that your narrative includes justification for every line item claimed. At the end of each Category, provide the total points claimed in the subtotal line for that Category. Then add the subtotals from each category and enter the Total of Points for All Categories in the last line. Note that some Categories have a maximum number of points allowed that may be less than the total sum of individual line items.</p>			
Line Item #	Category 1 – Project Purpose (Points will be awarded for <u>only one</u> Project Purpose)	Claimed Yes/No	Points
1.A	Project eliminates lead service lines (100% of project is to replace known lead service lines) <b>OR</b>		20
1.B	Project establishes and implements a program to find and replace lead service lines in areas suspected to have lead service lines <b>OR</b>		15
1.C	Project inventories lead service lines (no replacement)		10
<b>Maximum points for Category 1 – Project Purpose</b>			20
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 1 – Project Purpose</b>			
Line Item #	Category 2 – Project Benefits	Claimed Yes/No	Points
2.A	Project addresses/resolves documented Lead Action Level Exceedance <b>OR</b>		5
2.B	Project area has documented Lead Action Level Exceedance		2
<b>Maximum points for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>			5
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 2 – Project Benefits</b>			
Line Item #	Category 3 – System Management	Claimed Yes/No	Points
	(Reserved for future consideration)		
<b>Maximum points for Category 3 – System Management</b>			0
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 3 – System Management</b>			N/A
Line Item #	Category 4 – Affordability	Claimed Yes/No	Points
4.A	Residential Connections		
4.A.1	Less than 10,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		2
4.A.2	Less than 5,000 residential connections <b>OR</b>		4
4.A.3	Less than 1,000 residential connections		8



<b>2024 PRS for LSLR Projects Eligible for BIL DWSRF-LSLR funds</b>			
<b>4.B</b>	Current Monthly Combined Utility Rates at 5,000-gallon Usage		
4.B.1	Greater than <del>\$79</del> the 50 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		4
4.B.2	Greater than <del>\$90</del> the 70 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		6
4.B.3	Greater than <del>\$107</del> the 85 <sup>th</sup> percentile <b>OR</b>		8
4.B.4	Greater than <del>\$129</del> the 95 <sup>th</sup> percentile		10
<b>4.C</b>	Local Government Unit (LGU) Indicators		
4.C.1	3 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		3
4.C.2	4 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		5
4.C.3	5 out of 5 LGU indicators worse than state benchmark <b>OR</b>		7
4.C.4	Project benefits disadvantaged areas		5
<b>Maximum points for Category 4 – Affordability</b>			25
<b>Subtotal claimed for Category 4 – Affordability</b>			
<b>Total of Points for All Categories</b>			