

Derry gets \$1.8 mil for drinking water infrastructure improvements

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DERRY — The town has received funding to update the drinking water infrastructure in town as a way to help residents of Morningside Drive improve their water quality.

At the May 29 New Hampshire Executive Council meeting, the councilors voted unanimously to award a total of \$1.8 million to the Morningside Drive Association, a nonprofit created in 1985 to provide community water.

Of the \$1.8 million, approximately \$1.5 million will be from a federal grant, said Executive Councilor Janet Stevens in a social media post. Stevens' district contains Derry, Pelham, Plaistow, Salem and Windham.

“Funding will allow the association to interconnect with the town of Derry water system,” Stevens wrote.

This funding comes from a request filed on March 10 by the Morningside Drive Association looking to use money from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021.

“Morningside Drive Association will use (ARPA) grant funding to interconnect with the town of Derry water system to address per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) present within the community's drinking water sources,” wrote John Slater, a member of the association.

PFAS are chemicals that take a significant time to break down in the environment, according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency.

The EPA says that exposure to PFAS can be damaging to humans and animals and is linked to multiple health problems, including thyroid and liver disorders, reproductive and fetal development problems, immune system deficiencies, high cholesterol, and kidney, testicular, and other cancers.

Recently, there have been reports of PFAS and other harmful chemicals in wells from communities surrounding Derry, including Londonderry and Manchester.

The application did not specify if there were PFAS present in the current water supply on Morningside Drive, but did say attaching to the town water system would help limit PFAS contamination.

The funds will be available until Dec. 1, 2025 and are to be used to complete design, bidding, construction, and engineering contracts for the project.