October 2, 2026

Scott Owen
Perry County
212 South Main Street,
New Lexington, OH 43764

Re: Perry County
Phase 6 Water Line Extension
Loan Number: FS390064-0021
Finding of No Significant Impact

To Whom It May Concern,

On August 31, 2026, Ohio EPA issued a preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) and Environmental Assessment for the Perry County Phase 6 Water Line Extension project for public review and comment. The 30-day period for comments has passed and no comments have been received. Therefore, the conclusions contained in that preliminary FNSI become the basis for this final FNSI for the above referenced project.

This final Finding of No Significant Impact may be revised or rescinded at a future date based upon either changes to the proposed project, the presentation of information which significantly alters earlier conclusions, or failure of the applicant to perform the environmental mitigation prescribed in the Environmental Assessment.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

50 W. Town Street
Suite 700
Columbus, Ohio 43215 U.S.A.

614 | 644 3020
epa.ohio.gov

The State of Ohio is an Equal Opportunity Employer and Provider of ADA Services

August 31, 2026

Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies

Perry County
Phase 6 Water Line Extension
Loan Number: FS390064-0021

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a water line extension project in northern Perry County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to the email address of the contact named at the end of the EA. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, Perry can then proceed with its application for the WSRLA loan.

Sincerely,

Steve Malone, for

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Phase 6 Water Line Extension

Applicant: Perry County
212 South Main Street
New Lexington, Oho 43764

Loan Number: FS390064-0021

Project Summary

Perry County requested $3,597,900 from the Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) to construct water line extensions in northern Perry County. The five new segments will extend service over 11 miles to approximately 62 customers who currently do not have public water service in Hopewell, Jackson, Pike, Reading, Clayton, Thorn, and Madison townships.

Water lines will be installed along highways in the right-of-way and along existing utilities. Monthly water bills will be implemented for new residents to pay for water service. This project will result in long-term community water quality benefits by reducing exposure to pathogens in existing contaminated private drinking water sources. The project is eligible for $1,798,950 in principal forgiveness, which will not need to be repaid. Perry County anticipates construction of the project beginning shortly after loan award with expected completion within 12 months.

History & Existing Conditions

Perry County is in southeast Ohio, where many residents are spread out across the rural, hilly terrain (figures 1 and 2). Perry County commissioners created the Northern Perry County Water District (NPCWD) as a regional water district of the county that maintains, operates, and supplies metered water to residents of northern Perry County. As authorized under the Ohio Revised Code, the Perry County commissioners operate NPCWD as a county office for the purpose of promoting public health and welfare through the supply of public water.

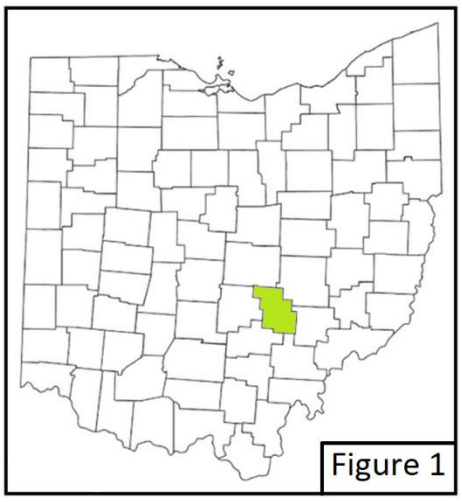
Figure 1

NPCWD relies exclusively on water provided by the Burr Oak Regional Water District and the Village of Thornville. NPCWD currently provides water service in Hopewell, Jackson, Pike, Clayton, Madison, Reading and Thorn townships to a population of approximately 3,000 people, through approximately 105 miles of water line.

Many of the residents who live in northern Perry County use private wells, cisterns, or springs for their drinking water sources. The quantity of this water is limited, and microbiological sampling of several of these sources show positive results for total coliform and E. coli bacteria in multiple locations. The use of cisterns or springs increases the risk of human health problems associated with bacteria and other contaminants entering these water sources.

NPCWD surveyed residents to determine interest in public water provided by the county. Many people responded positively, and this project will be part of a larger effort to provide public water service to residents of northern Perry County who currently have inadequate private water sources. NPCWD has implemented five previous phases of water line extension projects in northern Perry County, with the most recent, Phase 5, almost complete. The district anticipates continuing future water service extensions as local residents continue to petition for service.

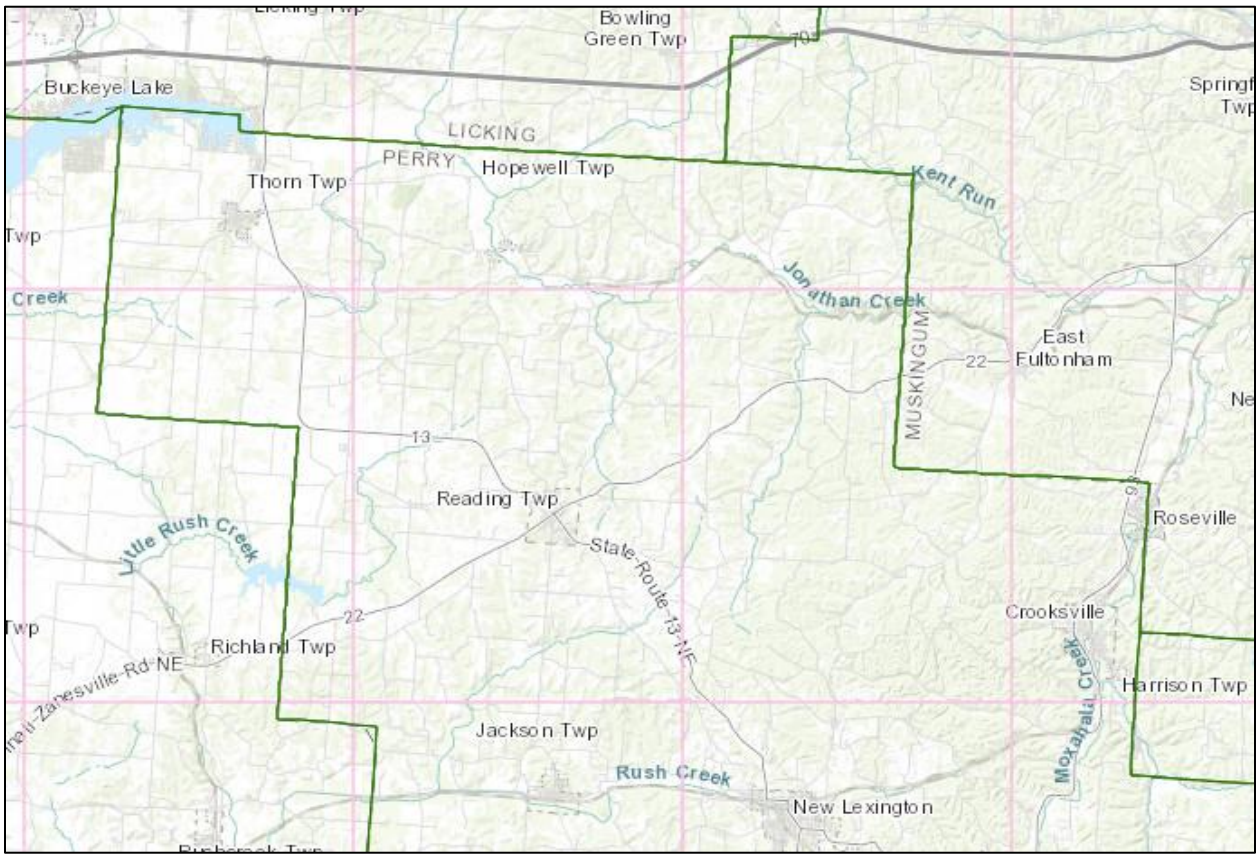

Figure 2. Map of northern Perry County

Population and Flow Projections

The population of the NPCWD is approximately 3,000 people, or 1,220 customers. The population is projected to increase 5.5% in the next 20 years.

NPCWD purchases water from the Burr Oak Regional Water District and the Village of Thornville. Burr Oak Regional Water District is designed to produce 4 million gallons per day (MGD) and produces an average of 1.93 MGD. The Village of Thornville's WTP is designed to produce 504,000 GPD and has an average production of 189,000 GPD. NPCWD currently purchases approximately 183,000 GPD. There is potential for NPCWD to expand due to a lack of quality and capacity in private water wells, causing households to desire water service connections. Water usage generally increases every year. Over the next 20 years, Perry County predicts a 25% increase in water service usage.

Alternatives

To address residents with inadequate supplies of safe and reliable sources of potable water, NPCWD evaluated two alternatives. The no-action alternative of continuing with the current situation would leave residents with unsafe, limited, or expensive water sources. Therefore, this alternative was not deemed feasible.

1. Service via an alternate system. Since NPCWD already has water lines in the area, this option was deemed technically infeasible without extensive construction and related costs. There are no other closer alternative water sources. This option was not pursued further.

2. Service the area by extension of NPCWD water lines. Perry County has already constructed five phases of water line extensions throughout various northern regions of the county. This option is the most cost-effective solution for providing public water service to the area.

Selected Alternative

The proposed project will extend over 11 miles of water line to at least 62 new water customers in northern Perry County. Additional customers may request a water tap as the project is constructed. The water line extensions are comprised of 20,090 linear feet (LF) of 6-inch water line along Buckeye Valley Road, US 22, Amish Ridge Road, and Cooper Ridge Road, and 38,505 LF of 4-inch water line along Township Road 491, Township Road 474, Amish Ridge Road, Church Street, Vine Street, State Route 204, US 22, Wesley Chapel Road, Township Road 57, Township Road 156, and Pole Cat Road (see Figure 3). Water meters will be installed with each tap connection.

Water line will be installed along local roads and highways, in the right-of-way primarily. All stream and culvert crossings will be made by horizontal directional drilling (HDD) to avoid disturbing these resources.

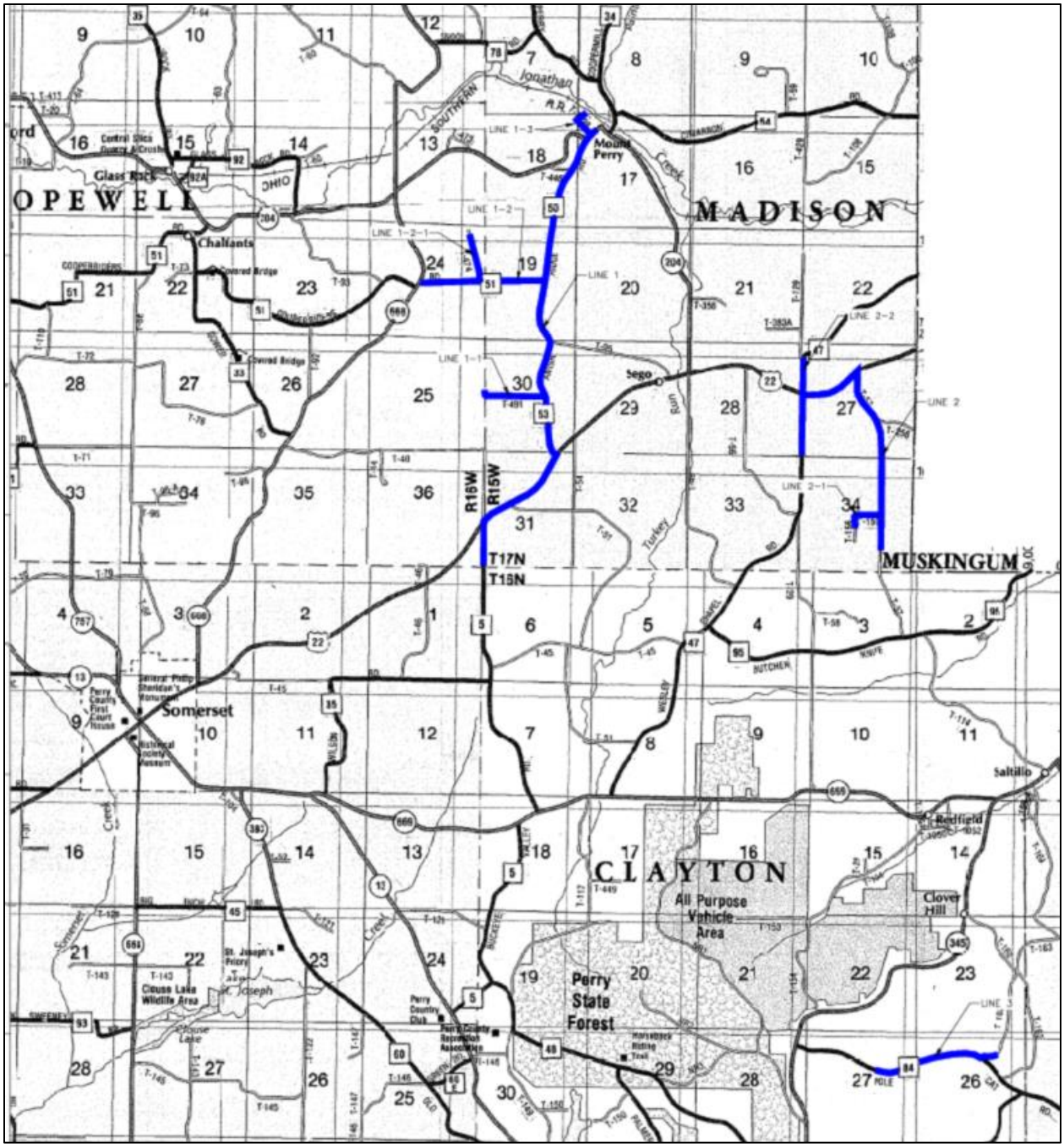

Figure 3. Map of proposed water line extensions for Phase 6.

Implementation

Perry County requested $3,597,900 from the WSRLA for the sixth phase of water line extensions. This loan is eligible for $1,798,950 in principal forgiveness, which means this amount need not be repaid. The remainder of the project cost is eligible for a 0% regionalization interest rate. During a 30-year

WSRLA loan term, Perry County could save a substantial amount by using principal forgiveness and discounted interest rates, compared to the market interest rate, currently at 4.79%.

New customers will pay the same rates as existing customers or businesses for water service. Water rates are $40 for the first 2,000 gallons and $11 for each additional 1,000 gallons. Tap fees for a ¾-inch tap are $1,500 for new residential customers. New customers will pay to connect to the public water line. The estimated median household income (MHI) for a resident of Perry County is $62,899. The average annual water bills will amount to $612, which is 1.0% of the MHI.

Assuming loan award in October 2026, construction will begin shortly thereafter with expected completion within 18 months.

Public Participation

Perry County has made good efforts as this project was planned and designed to include and inform the public about its scope and implementation. Water request forms were routinely distributed as a means for residents to express their desire for public water. Water request forms submitted to NPCWD have been used to identify interest in service areas for planned water line extensions in northern Perry County. This demonstrates interest in water service and support for the expansion of public water services.

A letter will be sent notifying customers when arrangements can be made for meter installation, and a construction inspector will be on site to notify the residents when meter pits will be installed.

Ohio EPA is unaware of any controversy about or opposition to this project. This Environmental Assessment (EA) and preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) will be posted on the Ohio EPA Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance website. Additionally, the EA and FNSI have been provided to Perry County to be made available according to their public notification procedures.

Environmental Impacts

The project has the potential to affect the following features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

Air Quality and Dust

The proposed project will result in a temporary increase in dust and exhaust fumes from construction activities. This will be mitigated by standard construction best management practices (BMPs), including emission control on motorized equipment. Dust due to excavation in dry weather will be controlled by good housekeeping measures (minimizing the area of disturbed soil, road sweeping, dust suppression with water or other benign dust suppressant). Because of its temporary nature and the use of emissions controls on motorized equipment, construction vehicle exhaust will be an insignificant pollution source compared to background sources of motorized vehicle exhaust in the greater project area.

Archaeological and Historical Resources

A Phase 1 Archaeological and Cultural survey was performed along the project alignment to determine if any unknown and significant archaeological resources are present. The alignment is primarily along roads, tree-lawn, and other developed and disturbed land, and no significant items or sites were discovered during the survey. No historic houses or buildings are within the new water line alignment, and a cemetery at the end of a water line alignment will be avoided. The State Historic Preservation Office has reviewed the project and concurs with Ohio EPA's finding of no impact to archaeological and historic resources.

Aquatic Habitat

The water line extensions will cross several streams along the rural roads. All streams will be crossed by horizontal directional drilling underneath the stream bed to avoid impacting aquatic habitat and wildlife.

Aesthetics

Any areas impacted during construction, including land and streets, will be returned to pre-construction conditions. The water meter pits will be a new addition to residential properties, but homeowners understand that this is a necessary part of new public water services. Residents will be notified before construction begins. Disturbed soil will be re-seeded and grade restored after the water line is installed, so any aesthetic impacts should be minimal.

Endangered Species, Fish and Wildlife

The entire state of Ohio is within the range of the Indiana bat (*Myotis sodalis*) and northern long-eared bat (*Myotis septentrionalis*), state endangered and federally endangered species; the little brown bat (*Myotis lucifugus*), a state endangered species; and the tricolored bat (*Perimyotis subflavus*), a state endangered species. During the warm months, these species of bats predominately roost and breed in trees. Thus, any tree cutting shall only occur from October 1 through March 31, which is outside of bat roosting season. Because this project will occur along developed roads, in neighborhoods, and rights-of-way, and any tree cutting will occur when bats are inactive and less likely to be using this habitat, the project is unlikely to impact these species.

The project is within the range of the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus)*, a federally proposed threatened species. Monarch butterflies are dependent on milkweed for their caterpillars to feed on, as well as meadow and prairie native flowering plants for adults to feed on. Because this project will be located predominantly in existing roads close to or within rights-of-way, the monarch butterfly and its grassland and prairie habitats will not be impacted.

In addition to responsibilities to protect threatened and endangered species under the Endangered Species Act, there are additional responsibilities under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act to protect native birds from project-related impacts. There are no eagle nests currently within the project area, and relatively little tree removal is planned, so these species should not be impacted.

Floodplains

The project will avoid construction in regulatory floodplains; therefore, will not impact this resource.

Local Economy

By utilizing WSRLA principal forgiveness, Perry County is minimizing costs passed on to its users. Residents of Perry County are receiving public water service because they petitioned for it and connection is voluntary. Existing NPCWD rates are considered reasonable and affordable.

Traffic

This project will occur along local roads and neighborhood streets. The traffic control plan ensures that roads will remain open and all local businesses and homeowners will have access to their properties throughout construction, thereby minimizing traffic impacts.

Safety and Noise

Construction BMPs and safety standards will be followed by the contractor for this project as outlined in detail plan notes. Construction will occur only during normal daytime hours. Therefore, the project should have no long-term change or adverse impacts on public safety or noise levels.

Surface Water Resources

Sediment and erosion controls will be present where soil excavations may erode to waterways or ditches. Open excavations will be minimized, as much of the water line will be installed by HDD. Stream crossings will be made by HDD under streams to avoid disturbing the stream bed and aquatic habitat.

Safe Drinking Water

Residents currently do not have reliable, clean, public water. By connecting to public water services, residents will have access to clean drinking water.

Terrestrial Habitat

The water line alignment was designed to follow existing roads and right-of-way to avoid disturbing terrestrial habitats such as forest or prairie. Roads and ditches where much of the water line will be installed have already been disturbed and graded; therefore, this design will minimize impact to terrestrial habitat.

Wetlands

One wetland is located along the water line alignment adjacent to the roadway and ditch. Any impact will be avoided by installing the water line by HDD underneath this area. Bore pits will be located upland outside the wetland.

Unaffected Resources

The following resources are not present and therefore will not be impacted by this project: *Coastal Zones, Groundwater Resources, Prime Farmland, Sole Source Aquifers, and State or Federal Wild or Scenic Rivers*. Additionally, there will be no change in current *Energy Use* or *Land Use*.

Conclusion

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from

the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

This project will result in the extension of public water service for approximately 62 homes and businesses currently not served by a public water system. This will allow these residents to receive consistent and reliable clean drinking water.

Contact information

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