

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Approval of Facilities Plan
City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee
Loan No. DW9 2023-255

June 1, 2026

The National Environmental Policy Act requires federally designated agencies to determine whether a proposed major agency action will significantly affect the environment. One such major action, defined by the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), is the approval of a facilities plan prepared pursuant to EPA 816-R-97-005, Final Guidelines. In making this determination, the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program assumes that all facilities and actions recommended by the plan will be implemented. The State's analysis concludes that implementing the plan will not significantly affect the environment; accordingly, the State Revolving Fund Loan Program is issuing this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for public review.

The City of LaFollette has completed the facilities plan entitled “SRF Downtown Water Transmission Main Improvements Facilities Plan” dated December 30, 2024. The facilities plan provides recommendations to extend the water transmission main to provide sufficient pressure to overcome the challenges posed by high-water-demand events, ensuring safe and reliable water service to the community.

This project will consist of the installation of approximately 7,100 linear feet (LF) of 12-inch diameter and 6-inch diameter ductile iron water mains by open cut, approximately 180 LF of 24-inch diameter casing and 90 LF of 12-inch diameter steel casing by auger-bore along SR-63 from Old Jacksboro Highway to North 13 Street, and along Walden Avenue from North 13th Street to North 5th Street.

The total estimated cost for construction is \$3,588,790. A DWSRF loan in the amount of \$170,000 has been awarded for the planning and design of this project. The planning and design for this project was funded with an \$85,000 DWSRF loan and \$85,000 in principal forgiveness that will not have to be repaid by the City of LaFollette. The City of LaFollette intends to request a DWSRF loan for the construction of this project.

Attached is an Environmental Assessment containing detailed information supporting this action. Comments supporting or disagreeing with this proposed action received within 30 days of the date of this FNSI will be evaluated before we make a final decision to proceed.

If you wish to comment or to challenge this FNSI, email your comment(s) to:

Ms. Felicia D. Freeman, Environmental Manager at felicia.d.freeman@tn.gov
Division of Water Resources, State Revolving Fund Loan Program
Davy Crockett Tower, 9th Floor
500 James Robertson Parkway, Nashville, TN 37243

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee
Loan No. DW9 2023-255
June 1, 2026

A. PROPOSED FACILITIES AND ACTIONS; FUNDING STATUS

The City of LaFollette has completed the facilities plan entitled “SRF Downtown Water Transmission Main Improvements Facilities Plan” dated December 30, 2024. The facilities plan provides recommendations to extend the water transmission main to provide sufficient pressure to overcome the challenges posed by high-water-demand events, ensuring safe and reliable water service to the community.

This project will consist of the installation of approximately 7,100 linear feet (LF) of 12-inch diameter and 6-inch diameter ductile iron water mains by open cut, approximately 180 LF of 24-inch diameter casing and 90 LF of 12-inch diameter steel casing by auger-bore along SR-63 from Old Jacksboro Highway to North 13 Street, and along Walden Avenue from North 13th Street to North 5th Street. Locations of the water transmission main extensions are indicated on Figure No. 1 of this Environmental Assessment.

FUNDING STATUS

The facilities described above comprise the scope of Loan No. DW9 2023-255 which was awarded in fiscal year 2023. The project’s planning and design costs are summarized in the following tabulation:

<u>PROJECT CLASSIFICATIONS</u>	<u>COSTS (\$)</u>
Administrative & Legal	8,500
Planning Fees	10,000
Design Fees	91,500
Other Engineering Fees	60,000
TOTAL	170,000
	DWSRF Loan 170,000
Amount Designated for Principal Forgiveness	85,000
(Will not have to be repaid)	

The total estimated cost for construction is \$3,588,790. A DWSRF loan in the amount of \$170,000 has been awarded for the planning and design of this project. The planning and design for this project was funded with an \$85,000 DWSRF loan and \$85,000 in principal forgiveness that will not have to be repaid by the City of LaFollette. The City of LaFollette intends to request a DWSRF loan for the construction of this project.

B. EXISTING ENVIRONMENT

The City of LaFollette’s planning area is located in the eastern part of Tennessee. Existing environmental features are described below:

SURFACE WATERS

Surface waters within the proposed planning area include the Powel River, Clinch River, Norris Lake, Cove Lake, Cove Creek, Big Creek, and their tributaries. Designated uses for the Powel

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee Loan No. DW9 2023-255 June 1, 2026

River include fish and aquatic life, recreation, irrigation, livestock watering and wildlife. Designated uses for the Clinch River include domestic water supply, industrial water supply, fish and aquatic life, recreation, irrigation, livestock watering and wildlife. Designated uses for Norris and Cove Lake include industrial water supply, fish and aquatic life, recreation. Designated uses for Cove and Big Creek include domestic water supply, industrial water supply, recreation, irrigation, livestock watering and wildlife. Designated uses for the tributaries of the Powel and Clinch River are classified as domestic water supply, industrial water supply, fish and aquatic life, recreation, irrigation, livestock watering and wildlife. LaFollette obtains its drinking water from the Big Creek embayment, upstream of Norris Lake, ensuring a higher-quality raw water source.

The source of drinking water for the City of LaFollette is from the Big Creek embayment, located upstream of Norris Lake. The City of LaFollette's Wastewater Treatment Plant discharges treated effluent at River Mile 17.7, downstream of the Big Creek embayment.

GROUNDWATER

The underlying geologic formations within the City of LaFollette's planning area are part of the Cumberland Plateau and the Valley and Ridge Province. The Valley and Ridge Province are composed of folded and faulted sedimentary rocks, including limestone, dolomite, shale, and sandstone. The Valley and Ridge Region is known for karst topography, which includes sinkholes, caves, and underground streams due to the dissolution of limestone. In the Valley and Ridge Province, groundwater flows through fractures and solution-enlarged conduits in the karst system. Rapid recharge from precipitation can lead to fluctuations in water quality because the water undergoes minimal filtration. As a result, the risk of contamination increases, allowing bacteria and fecal coliforms like *E. coli* to enter the water supply. Springs are common and provide direct discharge points for groundwater. Aquifers in this Valley and Ridge Province region are often connected to surface water bodies like Norris Lake.

The Cumberland Plateau is dominated by sandstone, shale, coal seams. Groundwater movement in the Cumberland Plateau region is slower and more predictable due to the relatively impermeable sandstone layers. Recharge occurs in higher elevations, where precipitation infiltrates fractures and weathered zones.

Residents who are not connected to the City of LaFollette's water system obtain their drinking water from wells. The wells can range from 200 feet (ft) deep near Norris Lake/Powell Reservoir up to 600ft deep at higher elevations. The quality of the water ranges from very good to very poor. Residents experience poor water quality because of the presence of minerals such as sulfate, hydrogen sulfide, calcium, and magnesium carbonates and from other groundwater contamination such as bacteria and fecal coliforms like *E. coli*.

SOILS

Soil associations occurring in the City of LaFollette's planning area include the Cumberland Plateau, and the Valley and Ridge Soil Associations. Soils in the Cumberland Plateau Association are found primarily in the western part of the planning area, especially in elevated regions. The Cumberland Plateau Soil Association is considered to be well-drained and typically supports forests, grasslands, or agricultural uses depending on the slope. These soils are often acidic due to the weathered sandstone and shale of the plateau.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee Loan No. DW9 2023-255 June 1, 2026

Soils in the Valley and Ridge Soil Associations are found in the eastern part of the planning area, Powell River Valley, and surrounding areas. The soils are shaped by the terrain's folded rock layers. Valley and Ridge Soils are well-drained and less acidic compared to the plateau region. Generally, these soils are rich in nutrients and suitable for agriculture, supporting crops such as corn, tobacco, and hay.

TOPOGRAPHY

The City of LaFollette's planning area is located in the Cumberland Plateau and the Valley and Ridge Province. The topography of the Valley and Ridge Province area ranges from 800 feet to 2,000 feet above mean sea level (MSL). The valleys tend to lie at lower elevations between 800 to 1,200 feet. The ridges are typically higher, ranging from 1,200 to 2,000 feet. The topography of the Cumberland Plateau ranges from 1,500 feet to 2,500 feet above MSL. The plateau has a relatively flat to gently rolling surface, deeply dissected by valleys and gorges. The peaks and ridges can exceed 2,500 feet, especially in areas of rugged terrain.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL FEATURES

No wild or scenic rivers or unique agricultural, scientific, cultural, ecological, or natural areas were identified in LaFollette's planning area.

C. EXISTING WATER FACILITIES

The City of LaFollette owns and operates a water treatment plant (WTP) with a design capacity of 4.0 MGD. The WTP was originally constructed in 1992 and consists of a raw water intake, pumps, a Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) room and laboratory, package treatment unit, chemical storage, backwash pond, clearwell, and instrumentation. The average daily water demand is 2.3 MGD. The City of LaFollette WTP has adequate capacity to meet the water demand of the proposed water transmission main extensions. The City of LaFollette has five certified plant operators that operate and maintain the plant. The city's staff maintain and fix assets in the plant on a routine basis so the useful life of the WTP is expected to last another 25 years.

City of LaFollette's water distribution system serves a population of approximately 27,300 people with 10,600 water meters. The water distribution system consists of approximately 400 miles of 2-inch through 18-inch diameter waterlines consisting of copper, PVC, cast iron, ductile iron, and galvanized materials. The city operates 14 water storage tanks with a total storage capacity of 4.68 million gallons and 16 pumping stations with capacities ranging from 30 gallon per minute (gpm) to 780 gpm. The available storage capacity is more than twice the average day demand.

D. NEED FOR PROPOSED FACILITIES AND ACTIONS

The City of LaFollette distribution system's East End pressure zone is unable to maintain a system pressure of 20 psi and provide the necessary flow to the West End Zone through the West End Pump Station (PS). The existing low pressure at the West End PS causes the pump to run to the far right of its curve, restricting flow into the West End Zone, meanwhile risking pump damage such as cavitation, overheating, loss of prime, and impaired efficiency. The consequential effects of those damages would cause rapid deterioration of the pumps, eventually leading City of LaFollette to significantly accelerate their capital spending for repairs and replacements. Providing

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee
Loan No. DW9 2023-255
June 1, 2026

a new water line connection would boost the suction pressure and prevent it from going below critical conditions. This will ensure not only longevity and health of the existing pumps at West End PS but also prevent any water service downtime caused if the pumps were damaged by the existing low suction pressure. The proposed water transmission main extensions will provide residents with continuous safe and dependable drinking water to meet their basic needs. The environmental benefits of this project will be the improvement of water quality conditions in the area, and an improvement to public health.

EXISTING AND PROJECTED FACILITY CONDITIONS

<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>EXISTING (2026)</u>	<u>PROJECTED (2046)</u>
City of LaFollette	6,983	6,433
Percent Served	90 %	90 %
Service Area Excluding City of LaFollette	32,574	30,003
Percent Served	65 %	65 %
Total Service Area	39,557	36,436
Percent Served	69 %	69 %

<u>WATER NEEDS (gpd)</u>	<u>EXISTING (2026)</u>	<u>PROJECTED (2046)</u>
Residential/Commercial/Industrial	1,541,000	1,419,395
Loss	759,000	699,105
TOTAL	2,300,000	2,118,500

E. ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

Several alternatives were evaluated in the City of LaFollette’s Facilities Plan. Discussions of the evaluation of these alternatives and the recommended plan are as follows:

NO-ACTION

Under the no-action alternative, the distribution system will be kept as it is, without implementing any changes. This would involve no immediate cost but does not solve the existing pressure problem. The no-action alternative is not a viable option. Therefore, this alternative was rejected.

Connection to Caryville-Jacksboro Utility Commission

This alternative involves connecting neighboring Caryville-Jacksboro Utilities Commission’s water infrastructure to boost the suction pressure of LaFollette Utilities Board (LUB)’s West End PS. A large diameter waterline would need to be extended almost 3 miles to the suction side of West End PS. The cost of implementing these improvements is expensive considering the proximity of the available infrastructure in LUB’s system. This alternative was not the most cost-effective solution and was rejected.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee
Loan No. DW9 2023-255
June 1, 2026

Installation of a 12-inch water main from West End PS to Massachusetts Avenue

This alternative involves installing a 12-inch-or-larger-diameter waterline and connecting it directly from the West End PS to the existing 16-inch diameter water transmission main on Massachusetts Avenue. The total length of the proposed main would be over 12,000 LF, which would incur a massive cost; and the alignment would inevitably have to cross a creek. This alternative was not the most cost-effective solution and was rejected.

Installation of a 12-inch water main from West End PS to N 5th Street

This alternative will consist of installing a 12-inch diameter waterline directly from the suction side of the West End PS to an existing 12-inch diameter waterline at N 5th Street. Making the connection at the existing 12-inch watermain instead of the 16-inch diameter water transmission main not only provides enough suction pressure to withstand high-flow demand events but also allows LUB to reduce the length of the required waterline by half, prevent a creek crossing, and significantly reduce capital costs. This alternative was the most cost-effective solution and was selected.

F. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES; MITIGATIVE MEASURES

The environmental benefits of this project will be the improvement of water quality conditions in the area, and an improvement to public health.

During the construction phase, short-term environmental impacts due to noise, dust, mud, disruption of traffic, runoff of silt with rainfall, etc., are unavoidable. Minimization of these impacts will be required; however, many of these minimization measures will only be temporary. Using the following measures to prevent erosion will minimize impacts on the environment:

1. Specifications will include temporary and permanent measures to be used for controlling erosion and sediment.
2. Soil or landscaping maintenance procedures will be included in the specifications.
3. The contractor will develop an Erosion Control Plan. It should contain a construction schedule for each temporary and permanent measure controlling erosion and sediment. It should include the location, type, and purpose for each measure and the times when temporary measures will be removed or replaced.

These measures, along with requiring the contractor to return the construction site as good-as or better-than its original condition, will prevent any adverse impacts due to erosion.

A Qualified Hydrologic Professional shall conduct a hydrologic determination to identify any aquatic resources that may be impacted during construction activities.

The City of LaFollette shall obtain a Construction Stormwater Permit (CGP) from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), Division of Water Resources (DWR), prior to the start of construction.

The City of LaFollette shall obtain applicable Section 10/404 Permits from the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) to meet the requirements of wetlands protection and stream crossing statutes.

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
City of LaFollette (Campbell and Claiborne Counties), Tennessee
Loan No. DW9 2023-255
June 1, 2026

G. SOURCES CONSULTED

Sources consulted about this project for information or concurrence were:

1. Tennessee Department of Agriculture
2. Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD)
3. TDEC, Division of Air Pollution Control (DAPC)
4. Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT)
5. Tennessee Historical Commission
6. TDEC, Division of Archaeology (DA)
7. Tennessee Geological Survey
8. TDEC, Division of Solid Waste Management (DSWM)
9. TDEC, DWR
10. Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency (TWRA)
11. USACE
12. United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&W)
13. City of LaFollette
14. Campbell and Claiborne Counties
15. Cannon and Cannon Inc.

H. SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Per inter-agency review and response, The State Revolving Fund loan agreement will have the following special conditions:

1. A Qualified Hydrologic Professional shall conduct a hydrologic determination to identify any aquatic resources that may be impacted during construction activities. A report must be submitted to TDEC-DWR, DWR.EnvironmentalReview@tn.gov , and to the SRF Loan Program through [MyTDEC Forms](#) prior to approval of the plans and specifications.
2. The City of LaFollette shall obtain applicable Section 10/404 Permits from the USACE to meet the requirements of wetlands protection and stream crossing statutes. Please contact Ms. Vessica Ragon, USACE, at (865) 986-7296 for further information. A copy of the permit shall be submitted to the SRF Loan Program though the [MyTDEC Forms](#) or a letter/email from the Corps stating that the permits are not needed will satisfy this requirement.