



## DRINKING WATER STATE REVOLVING LOAN FUND PROGRAM FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)

TO: All Interested Citizens, Government Agencies and Public Groups

In accordance with the Nebraska Drinking Water State Revolving Fund environmental review process, which is based on the National Environmental Policy Act, an environmental review has been performed on the proposed agency action below.

This information reviews the environmental impact likely from a project. This project is planned to be federally funded through your tax dollars; therefore, you are entitled to take part in its review. If you have concerns about the environmental impact of this project, please provide them at this time. The Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) encourages public input in this decision-making process.

PROJECT NAME:	New Water Transmission Main for Connection to City of Grand Island	
APPLICANT:	Village of Phillips	
COUNTY:	Hamilton County	
POPULATION:	320 (2020)	
DWSRF PROJECT NUMBER:	D311752	
TOTAL PROJECT AMOUNT:		\$3,956,000
PROPOSED AMOUNT ELIGIBLE FOR DWSRF FUNDING:		\$1,000,000
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN AMOUNT:		\$710,700
PROPOSED DWSRF LOAN FORGIVENESS AMOUNT:		\$289,300

The Village of Phillips has applied for funding for the above-referenced project through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) program administered by DWEE. The Village received an Administrative Order from the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) on December 22, 2022, due to uranium mass levels consistently exceeding the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 30 ug/L in both their wells. The Village has received uranium mass MCL violations for both wells since 2022. Therefore, the Village needs to obtain an alternative water source or pursue treatment of their existing sources for uranium so that they can provide drinking water in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The proposed project will include the development of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Village's Water System, which will evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of connecting to a proposed transmission main. The proposed transmission main will extend from Grand Island, NE to Giltner, NE and is anticipated to pass within approximately one mile of the Village. The PER will consider the long-term capital investment, operational requirements, and sustainability of connecting to the regional transmission system compared to the construction and maintenance of a water treatment facility or the development of an alternative water supply source. According to the Priority Ranking System in the 2026 Intended Use Plan (IUP), this project is considered to be high priority, and it is included on the Project Priority Funding List. Based on documentation on file, the project was determined to be eligible for a DWSRF loan with a corresponding principal forgiveness rate of 28.93%.

The Village of Phillips is located in south-central Nebraska, approximately seven miles southeast of the City of Grand Island. The community has experienced a population growth of approximately 11.5 percent over the past decade with a current population of 320 (2020 Census). The Village's Public Water System (PWS) consists of two potable wells (one constructed in 1995 and one constructed in 2015), a 40,000-gallon water tower, and a distribution system.

The proposed project was reviewed by federal and state agencies for environmental impacts. A number of the agencies responding indicated there would be no adverse impact, have no effect, posed no concern, or had no comment.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, identified the nearest public-use airport to the project as Central Nebraska Regional Airport (GRI) near Grand Island, Nebraska which is approximately 6.03 miles northwest of the project at its closest point. They noted that the project is unlikely to affect the airport's airspace, provided the height of any equipment used in the project does not exceed the local airport's Height Restriction Zoning.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers noted the applicability of their Section 404 permit requirements if it is determined that fill material would be placed into Waters of the U.S. Typically during project design, activities can be planned to avoid fill placement, such as boring of transmission lines or proper routing of pump test discharges.

The DWEE reviewed the proposed project for potential impacts to/requirements related to jurisdictional dams, floodplain management, registered groundwater wells, stream gages, surface water rights, air quality, water quality, and permitting requirements. Two public water supply wells were identified as being within the 1,000-foot spacing for the proposed project, and additional registered groundwater wells within the project boundary. Special care will be taken to locate and avoid impacting these wells in any significant way.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) identified threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat that may occur within the boundary of the project and/or may be affected by the project. The USFWS identified the northern long-eared bat, whooping crane, piping plover, pallid sturgeon, western prairie fringed orchid, monarch butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee as species having the potential to overlap the project impact area. The Nebraska Ecological Service's Field Office Conservation Measures Technical Assistance Guide, provided through consultation with the USFWS, provides listed species information and avoidance and minimization measures that can be implemented to avoid impacts to listed species. No trees are anticipated to be impacted. No changes to water quantity or quality are expected as part of this project. Whooping crane disturbance will be avoided during migration periods through timing of construction or surveys. Suitable habitat for western prairie fringed orchid will be avoided; if it cannot, then a survey will be conducted in coordination with USFWS. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) indicated the proposed project is within the range of the state and federally listed endangered northern long-eared bat and whooping crane; the state and federally listed threatened piping plover; and the state listed endangered interior least tern. No trees, waterways, or wetlands are anticipated to be impacted; therefore, negative impacts to the species listed above are not anticipated. The NGPC acknowledged a "No Effect" determination on May 18, 2026, for the proposed project based on the information provided. A requirement to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be included in the project specifications.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) evaluated the proposed site as required by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FFPA). They noted that the proposed project may contain areas of Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland; however, buried lines are exempt from the FFPA under Nebraska Instruction 310-380 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NESHPO) noted that the proposed project is unlikely to affect any cultural resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. Temporary impacts that may be caused by construction include noise and dust and a limited potential for soil erosion and fuel and oil spills.

The total estimated project cost is \$3,956,000, but the DWSRF is presently limited to provide funding in the amount of \$1,000,000. The Village is eligible for 28.93% on the proposed DWSRF funding amount, resulting in a loan forgiveness amount of \$289,300 and a loan amount of \$710,700. The Village is eligible for a 30-year loan at an interest rate of 1.0 percent. In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 1.0 percent of the principal balance will be assessed each year. If executed, the community will have an annual DWSRF debt service of \$37,989, which includes a ten percent coverage that is required on all loans. The revenues from Phillips' water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. For a typical residential connection, the current monthly rate is \$32.00 with a water use charge of \$2.25 per 1,000 gallons, resulting in an average monthly water bill of \$43.25 for a typical 5,000-gallon monthly household water use. Based on 202 active service connections, monthly household rates may need to be raised \$15.67 to pay for the new debt service. This estimate does not include additional rate increases that may be necessary to fund the project in its entirety, depending upon other funding sources.

A Public Hearing was held June 2, 2026, during which the Engineer discussed details of the project and open public discussion was held. No comments were noted in the meeting minutes. The hearing was advertised twice, 27 and 34 days in advance.

The Village has a permit to operate a public water system under the provisions of the Nebraska Safe Drinking Water Act and the Regulations Governing Public Water Supply Systems, Title 179. The proposed project is determined by DWEE to help the public water system obtain compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act. The system last underwent a routine sanitary survey by DWEE in August 2023, wherein several deficiencies were noted. These deficiencies have since been addressed. This completed survey is the first step of the Technical, Managerial, and Financial (TMF) program policy. A capacity assessment of the water system will continue on a triennial basis to ensure that their capabilities meet the requirements of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Also, their current Environmental Tracking Tool score is 0, below the allowable 11 per issued U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance.

No significant environmental impacts have been identified that would result from the proposed action. All necessary permits for construction or discharges will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (e.g., NRD, DWEE, etc.). Consequently, a preliminary decision has been made that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared.

This action is taken on the basis of a careful review of the engineering reports and other supporting data that are on file with DWEE. All are available for public review upon request. The DWEE will not take any administrative action on the project for at least 30 calendar days from the date shown below. Persons having a comment on this determination are encouraged to submit via email to [dwee.srf@nebraska.gov](mailto:dwee.srf@nebraska.gov).

Signed this 25<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2026.

Sincerely,



Sarah Starostka,  
Administrator  
Planning and Aid Division

Attachments: Environmental Assessment  
Distribution List  
Map

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT DOCUMENT

### A. Project Identification:

**Applicant:** Village of Phillips  
**Project No.:** D311752  
**Village:** Phillips                      **County:** Hamilton      **State:** NE  
**Total Project Cost:** \$3,956,000  
**Project Amount Eligible for DWSRF Funding:** \$1,000,000  
**Proposed DWSRF Loan Amount:** \$710,700  
**Proposed DWSRF Loan Forgiveness:** \$289,300

### B. Community Description:

**Location:** The Village of Phillips is located in south-central Nebraska, approximately seven miles southeast of the City of Grand Island.

**Population:** The community has experienced a population growth of approximately 11.5 percent over the past decade with a current population of 320 (2020 Census).

**Current Water System Facilities:** The Village of Phillips' Public Water System (PWS) consists of two potable wells (one constructed in 1995 and one constructed in 2015), a 40,000-gallon water tower, and a distribution system.

- C. Project Description:** The Village of Phillips received an Administrative Order from the Nebraska Department of Water, Energy, and Environment (DWEE) on December 22, 2022, due to uranium mass levels consistently exceeding the maximum contaminant level (MCL) of 30 ug/L in both their wells. The Village has received uranium mass MCL violations for both wells since 2022. Therefore, the Village needs to obtain an alternative water source or pursue treatment of their existing sources for uranium so that they can provide drinking water in compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA). The proposed project will include the development of a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the Village's Water System, which will evaluate the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of connecting to a proposed transmission main. The proposed transmission main will extend from Grand Island, NE to Giltner, NE and is anticipated to pass within approximately one mile of the Village. The PER will consider the long-term capital investment, operational requirements, and sustainability of connecting to the regional transmission system compared to the construction and maintenance of a water treatment facility or the development of an alternative water supply source.

### D. Alternatives Considered:

Alternatives to be considered are:

1. No project, or
2. Build a water treatment plant, or
3. Develop a new water supply, or
4. Connect to proposed regional transmission main

**Evaluation and Selection of the Alternative:** The Village of Phillips' wells have elevated uranium mass concentrations consistently exceeding the MCL level of 30 ug/L. Due to multiple uranium mass MCL violations, the Village received an Administrative Order. A proposed

transmission main will extend from Grand Island, NE to Giltner, NE and is anticipated to pass within one mile of the Village. Connecting to this transmission main would allow the Village to receive water from the City of Grand Island, whose water is in compliance with the uranium mass MCL, in addition to all other water quality requirements of the SDWA. Connecting to Grand Island would eliminate the Village's reliance on their current wells with uranium mass concentrations above the MCL and help them achieve compliance with the SDWA.

Building a water treatment plant to remove uranium from the groundwater is another potential solution to the elevated uranium concentrations in the Village's wells. The cost-effectiveness of this alternative compared to the proposed interconnection with the City of Grand Island will be evaluated in the PER included with this project.

The Village may be able develop a new water supply by drilling of new wells if they can locate suitable water quality in compliance with all SDWA requirements. One or more new wells could potentially be blended with the Village's existing wells to provide water with a uranium mass concentration below the MCL. At least two new wells may be required to meet state regulations for providing a supply of safe drinking water on a continuous basis. The cost-effectiveness of this alternative compared to the proposed interconnection with the City of Grand Island will be evaluated in in the PER included with this project.

If no project were constructed, the Village would be left with a water source exceeding the MCL for uranium mass. Per state regulations, the Village must provide its residents with a supply of safe drinking water on a continuous basis. The Village has an active Administrative Order that requires action to achieve compliance with the SDWA in a timely manner.

## **E. Environmental Impact Summary:**

### **Primary:**

**Construction:** Temporary impacts caused by construction may include noise and dust, a limited potential for soil erosion, and fuel/oil spills. All demolition, grading, and construction activities will comply with Fugitive Dust Title 129, Chapter 15 regulations. A PWS construction permit will be obtained from the Engineering Section of DWEE in accordance with Title 179 Chapter 7.

**Environmental:** The proposed project was reviewed by numerous federal and state agencies for environmental impacts. The construction contracts will require that the contractors return the area to its original or better condition. It is anticipated that the proposed transmission main will be installed within right-of-way (ROW) and on Village-owned property and no land purchase or easements will be required.

The Nebraska Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, identified the nearest public-use airport to the project as Central Nebraska Regional Airport (GRI) near Grand Island, Nebraska which is approximately 6.03 miles northwest of the project at its closest point. They noted that the project is unlikely to affect the airport's airspace, provided the height of any equipment used in the project does not exceed the local airport's Height Restriction Zoning.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers noted the applicability of their Section 404 permit requirements if it is determined that fill material would be placed into Waters of the U.S.

Typically during project design, activities can be planned to avoid fill placement, such as boring of transmission lines or proper routing of pump test discharges.

The DWEE has reviewed the proposed project for potential impacts to/requirements related to jurisdictional dams, floodplain management, registered groundwater wells, stream gages, surface water rights, air quality, water quality, and permitting requirements. Two public water supply wells were identified as being within the 1,000-foot spacing for the proposed project, and additional registered groundwater wells within the project boundary. Special care will be taken to locate and avoid impacting these wells in any significant way.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) identified threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat that may occur within the boundary of the project and/or may be affected by the project. The USFWS recommends that verification of the accuracy of the species list be verified after 90 days. Verification can be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species list and information. The USFWS identified the northern long-eared bat, whooping crane, piping plover, pallid sturgeon, western prairie fringed orchid, monarch butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee as species having the potential to overlap the project impact area. The Nebraska Ecological Service's Field Office Conservation Measures Technical Assistance Guide, provided through consultation with the USFWS, provides listed species information and avoidance and minimization measures that can be implemented to avoid impacts to listed species. No trees are anticipated to be impacted. No changes to water quantity or quality are expected as part of this project. Whooping crane disturbance will be avoided during migration periods through timing of construction or surveys. Suitable habitat for western prairie fringed orchid will be avoided; if it cannot, then a survey will be conducted in coordination with USFWS. A requirement to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be included in the project specifications.

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (NGPC) has responsibility for protecting endangered and threatened species under authority of the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act (Neb. Rev. Stat. § 37-801 to 37-814). The proposed project is within the range of the state and federally listed endangered northern long-eared bat and whooping crane; the state and federally listed threatened piping plover; and the state listed endangered interior least tern. No trees, waterways, or wetlands are anticipated to be impacted; therefore, negative impacts to the species listed above are not anticipated. The NGPC acknowledged a "No Effect" determination on May 18, 2026, for the proposed project based on the information provided.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) evaluated the proposed site as required by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FFPA). They noted that the proposed project may contain areas of Prime Farmland and Statewide Important Farmland; however, buried lines are exempt from the FFPA under Nebraska Instruction 310-380 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition.

The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NESHPO) noted that the proposed project is unlikely to affect any cultural resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If changes to the project are made, NESHPO will be

notified. Additionally, if any previously unknown historic properties are encountered during the project, all work will halt, and NESPHO will be contacted.

**Financial:** An application for DWSRF loan assistance has been received for the project described herein. The total estimated project cost is \$3,956,000, but the DWSRF is presently limited to provide funding in the amount of \$1,000,000. The Village is eligible for 28.93% on the proposed DWSRF funding amount, resulting in a loan forgiveness amount of \$289,300 and a loan amount of \$710,700. The Village is eligible for a 30-year loan at an interest rate of 1.0 percent. In addition to principal and interest payments, an administrative fee of 1.0 percent of the principal balance will be assessed each year. If executed, the community will have an annual DWSRF debt service of \$37,989, which includes a ten percent coverage that is required on all loans. The revenues from Phillips' water utility will be dedicated to repay the loan. For a typical residential connection, the current monthly rate is \$32.00 with a water use charge of \$2.25 per 1,000 gallons, resulting in an average monthly water bill of \$43.25 for a typical 5,000-gallon monthly household water use. Based on 202 active service connections, monthly household rates may need to be raised \$15.67 to pay for the new debt service. This estimate does not include additional rate increases that may be necessary to fund the project in its entirety, depending upon other funding sources. An assessment of costs and revenues will be conducted after completion of the project.

#### **Secondary:**

**Population Impacts:** The proposed project is not primarily needed for future growth, but to shift the Village's reliance on existing wells with uranium mass MCL exceedances to a new source meeting all SDWA requirements, thus obtaining compliance with the uranium drinking water standard and satisfying requirements of the current Administrative Order from DWEE. The improvements will be reasonably sized to accommodate predicted population trends.

**Land Use and Trends:** The proposed transmission main will be placed below ground at a depth where it will not interrupt any planned practices. The transmission main is anticipated to be constructed on land already owned by the Village and existing right-of-way. NESPHO noted that the proposed project is unlikely to affect any cultural resources listed or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. If any previously unknown historic properties are encountered during the project, all work will halt, and NESPHO will be contacted. The Nebraska State Fire Marshal Agency provided a list of tanks on record in the area of the proposed project location, and these will be avoided during construction.

**Environmental:** Any solid waste generated by the project will be disposed of in a licensed landfill. No safety, vibration, noise or aesthetic considerations were identified other than the normal noise and disruptions associated with water main construction.

**Environmental Justice:** The proposed project will not produce any environmental justice concerns. All construction will occur in areas owned by the Village and within existing right-of-way for utilities. The services provided by the proposed transmission main and connection to Grand Island's water supply will be available to everyone in the Village, equally. No segments of the Village's population are impacted disproportionately from related effects.

**Mitigation measures necessary to eliminate adverse environmental effect:** Proper construction techniques will be utilized to minimize soil erosion and other potential impacts of construction. Coverage under the Construction Storm Water General Permit NER210000 will need to be obtained, as required by DWEE. Additionally, if any pits need to be dewatered or groundwater lowered during construction, the site may need permitting under DWEE's Dewatering General Permit NEG671000. Whooping crane disturbance will be avoided during migration periods through timing of construction or surveys. Suitable habitat for western prairie fringed orchid will be avoided; if it cannot, then a survey will be conducted in coordination with USFWS. A requirement to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be included in the project specifications.

**Irreversible and irretrievable commitment of resources:** The resources committed to the project include the equipment, materials, and energy used in construction.

**F. Measures Taken to Ensure Environmental Soundness:**

**Public Involvement:** A Public Hearing was held June 2, 2026, during which the Engineer discussed details of the project and open public discussion was held. No comments were noted in the meeting minutes. The hearing was advertised twice, 27 and 34 days in advance.

**Public Opposition or Opinions:** No comments were noted in the meeting minutes.

**Coordination and Documentation with Other Agencies and Special Interest Groups:**

**Facility Planning:** Pre-Application for State and/or Federal Assistance, June 2, 2026

**Environmental Report:** Nebraska Game and Parks Environmental Review Report, Generated by David Holl with Miller & Associates on May 12, 2026  
U.S Fish and Wildlife Service Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Report/Species List, May 12, 2026

**Federal:** U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, May 14, 2026, email  
U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service, May 13, 2026, letter  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, May 19, 2026, email

**State:** NE Department of Transportation, Division of Aeronautics, May 22, 2026, email  
NE Department of Water, Energy, and Environment, May 27, 2026, letter  
NE Game and Parks Commission, May 18, 2026, letter  
NE State Fire Marshal Agency, June 9, 2026, email  
NE State Historic Preservation Office, May 18, 2026, letter

**Consulting Engineers:** Miller & Associates Consulting Group, P.C., Kearney, NE

**Public Groups:** Village of Phillips Residents

**G. Positive Effects to be Realized from the Proposed Project:** The proposed transmission main and connection to the City of Grand Island will allow the Village of Phillips to achieve

compliance with the Safe Drinking Water Act and ensure future water availability. The project is reasonable and not contrary to conservation or the public welfare.

- H. Reasons for Concluding there will be no Significant Impacts:** Review of the funding application and supporting information indicates that the proposed project will result in no significant impact on the environment. The USFWS identified threatened, endangered, proposed and candidate species, as well as proposed and final designated critical habitat that may occur within the boundary of the project and/or may be affected by the project. The USFWS identified the northern long-eared bat, whooping crane, piping plover, pallid sturgeon, western prairie fringed orchid, monarch butterfly, and Suckley's cuckoo bumble bee as species having the potential to overlap the project impact area. The Nebraska Ecological Service's Field Office Conservation Measures Technical Assistance Guide provides listed species information and avoidance and minimization measures that can be implemented to avoid impacts to listed species. No trees are anticipated to be impacted. No changes to water quantity or quality are expected as part of this project. Whooping crane disturbance will be avoided during migration periods through timing of construction or surveys. Suitable habitat for western prairie fringed orchid will be avoided; if it cannot, then a survey will be conducted in coordination with USFWS. The NGPC acknowledged a "No Effect" determination on May 18, 2026, for the proposed project based on the information provided. A requirement to comply with the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act will be included in the project specifications. Federal and state agencies reported no impact will result to farming, historical, or transportation resources. All necessary permits for construction have been or will be obtained from the appropriate agencies (i.e. NRD, DWEE, etc.), if necessary.



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Reviewing Engineer

06/24/2026  
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI) DISTRIBUTION LIST  
VILLAGE OF PHILLIPS NEBRASKA

DEPARTMENT OF WATER, ENERGY, &  
ENVIRONMENT

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NEBRASKA GAME & PARKS COMMISSION

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NEBRASKA STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY

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VILLAGE OF PHILLIPS, NE

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MILLER & ASSOCIATES CONSULTING GROUP

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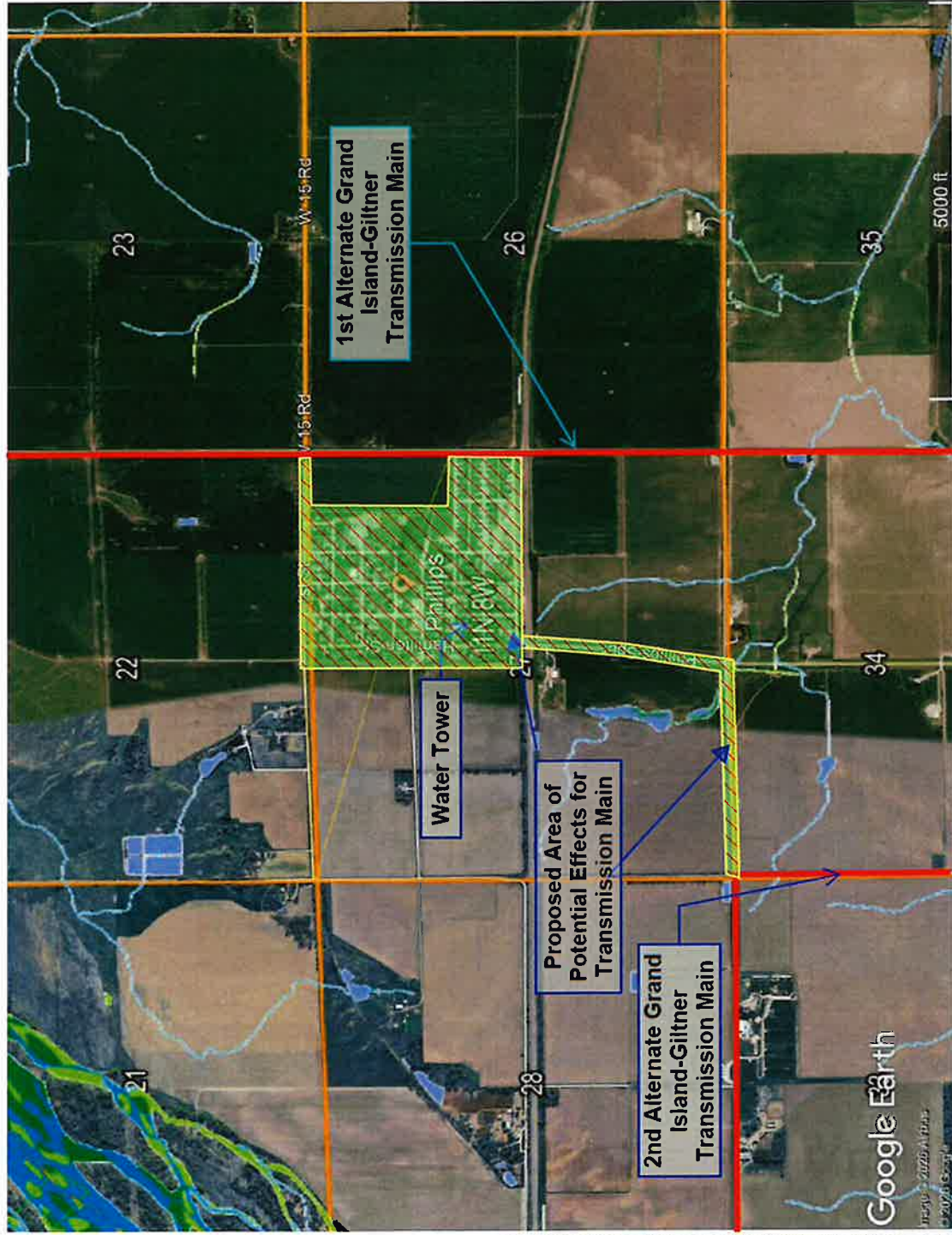
THE GRAND ISLAND INDEPENDENT

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(Public Information Only not for Public Notice)


UPPER BIG BLUE NRD


David A. Eigenberg, General Manager  
[mkoch@upperbigblue.org](mailto:mkoch@upperbigblue.org)  
319 E 25<sup>th</sup> Street  
York, NE 68467

Map



LEGEND

 Area of Potential Effects Proposed

 Grand Island-Giltner Transmission Main

Proposed Phillips  
Transmission Main

Phillips, NE

Project: 194-C1-000



Miller & Associates  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.

Path: C:\Project\194-C1-000\Phillips Environmental\Water Study\194-C1-000-Proposed Location Map.pdf  
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