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Life Sciences Center's first funding to help Genzyme expand

By Marc Songini

The town of Framingham will receive \$5.2 million in state money to improve its water and sewer infrastructure to allow local life science companies to expand their operations.

On Friday afternoon, the [Massachusetts Life Sciences Center](#) (MLSC) board of directors approved the grant during a meeting at Framingham's town hall. The disbursement is the first major investment supported by the \$1 billion Life Sciences Act approved by the Massachusetts Legislature and Gov. [Deval Patrick](#) earlier this year. The \$5.2 million will pay for the replacement of a wastewater pump station and connected pipes.

The new station will support a manufacturing expansion project by [Genzyme Corp.](#) that is expected to create an estimated 300 jobs over the next year, said a spokesman for the MLSC. To support the greater water flow capacity required by Genzyme's manufacturing expansion, the wastewater pumping station must be operational by September 2009. According to the Life Sciences Act's verbiage, another \$7 million will be invested to complete the Framingham water and sewer system upgrade to service the town's technology park.

Despite falling tax revenues and cuts in state funding, the life sciences initiative will continue, explained [Susan Windham-Bannister](#), president and CEO of the MLSC. The MLSC is a semi-public state agency created by the Massachusetts legislature in June 2006 to promote the life sciences industry.

The resources committed by the Life Sciences Act are crucial in maintaining Massachusetts' global lead in biotechnology industries, said Windham-Bannister.

"Our commitment to this broad funding will enable our cities and towns to compete," she said in an interview. "We don't want to lose companies to places such as North Carolina or Rhode Island. We are open for business." She noted that Framingham was an example of the growing number of communities in the metro-west area of Boston that are becoming "hubs for life sciences."

Patrick's administration also expressed its commitment to fulfilling the Life Sciences Act and

creating jobs. In a statement, Patrick said this is the type of investment required “even during challenging economic times.”