



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

AUG 17 2007

Honorable Frank P. Coccho, Mayor
City of Corning
14 Maple Street
Corning, New York 14830

Dear Mayor Coccho:

This is in response to a request by the City of Corning, New York, for a categorical exclusion (CATEX) from substantive environmental review requirements, pursuant to 40 CFR Part 6, for the proposed Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements project.

This project, which involves replacing bar screening and digester equipment and performing repairs to exterior digester walls at the wastewater treatment plant, is being partially funded through a federal Special Appropriation Grant.

Based on our review of the supporting documentation, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) approves the request for the CATEX. Please be reminded that EPA may revoke this CATEX if any of the following conditions occur:

- changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion;
- new evidence indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist; or
- federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

This CATEX is available for public viewing on EPA Region 2's website, <http://www.epa.gov/region02/spmm/r2nepa.hr2docs>. Should you have any questions regarding this decision, please address them to John Filippelli, Chief, Strategic Planning and Multi-Media Programs Branch, at the above address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan J. Steinberg".

Alan J. Steinberg
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Michael Harris, City of Corning
Gerald C. Hook, P.E., Steams and Wheler

ENCLOSURE

City of Corning Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements Steuben County, New York Special Appropriation Grant Project

Background

Certain wastewater process equipment and structures at the City of Corning's wastewater treatment plant are in either poor condition or have failed. More specifically, the bar screening facility equipment, anaerobic digester covers, and the exterior cladding on the digester tank walls need to be replaced or repaired.

Proposed Action

The proposed wastewater process equipment repairs or replacements consist of the following:

1. **Screen Facility** – Replace existing bar screen equipment with new rotary screens and associated hoists.
2. **Digester Covers** – Remove existing primary and secondary anaerobic digester covers and replace with new covers.
3. **Brick Repair**- Re-point and retool exterior brick cladding on the anaerobic digester tank walls.

Completing this work will enhance wastewater treatment plant operations. This also includes improving the performance, structural integrity, aesthetics, operation and maintenance, and safety of the screening facility equipment and anaerobic digesters.

Alternative Considered

In addition to the proposed action, "No Action" was considered. The no action alternative was rejected because it does not address the existing bar screen equipment in poor condition, the anaerobic digester covers that failed, and the deteriorating exterior brick cladding on the digester walls. Continuance of this condition may result in additional structural **and/or** mechanical wastewater process equipment failure, higher operation and maintenance costs, and compromise plant safety. Additionally, further use of failed anaerobic digester covers may result in process upsets, which could create undesirable odors within the plant and outdoor air, and degrade the quality of biosolids.

Eligibility for Granting a Categorical Exclusion

The project meets the general Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) eligibility criteria found in 40 CFR 6.107(d)(1). The regulations allow CATEXs for activities involving "actions which are solely directed toward . . . minor rehabilitation of existing facilities, functional replacement of equipment, or towards construction of new ancillary facilities adjacent or appurtenant to existing facilities."

Additionally, the available information on the proposed action indicates that the specific criteria for not granting a CATEX, found in 40 CFR 6.107(e), are not present. Specifically, the project will not result in a new or relocated discharge to surface or ground waters; will not increase the amount of pollutants discharged to receiving waters; and will not provide capacity to serve a population significantly greater than the existing population. Furthermore, there will be no significant adverse effects on cultural resources, endangered or threatened species, environmentally sensitive areas, or other environmentally important natural resource areas.

Conclusion

The proposed action conforms to the category of actions eligible for exclusion under 40 CFR 6.107(d)(1). Accordingly, EPA approves this request for a CATEX from detailed environmental review pursuant to our procedures for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act.