



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 2
290 BROADWAY
NEW YORK, NY 10007-1866

John J. Gosek, Mayor
City of Oswego
City Hall
13 West Oneida Street
Oswego, New York 13126

Dear Mayor Gosek:

This is in response to a request by the City of Oswego, New York, for a categorical exclusion (CATEX) from substantive environmental review requirements, pursuant to 40 CFR Part 6, for Phase II of its East Side Combined Sewer Overflow (CSO) Long Term Control Plan to reduce the frequency and magnitude of combined sewage overflows to the Oswego River and Lake Ontario.

Phase II of the plan involves improvements to an existing wastewater pumping station and installation of approximately 1,900 linear feet of gravity sewer and one mile of force main. Once completed, these facilities will convey wet weather flows from an existing combined sewage overflow facility to the City's existing East Side Wastewater Treatment Facility for treatment.

The City is receiving Special Appropriation Act grant funding for the project, which is being implemented pursuant to an April 2004 Consent Order between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the City of Oswego.

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.

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,

Alan J. Steinberg
Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: A. Leotta, P.E, City Engineer

ENCLOSURE

City of Oswego Oswego County, New York Phase II - East Side CSO Long Term Control Plan Special Appropriation Act Grant Project

Background

The City of Oswego, New York, is served by a system of combined sewers originally designed to convey both stormwater and sanitary wastewater to local waterways for disposal. Subsequently, these sewers were redirected to sewage treatment facilities which were designed for dry weather flow conditions. As a result, the system's conveyance and treatment capacity was exceeded during wet weather, resulting in the overflow and discharge of untreated wastewater to local water bodies. Although the City implemented a number of sewer separation projects, there are still locations where combined sewage overflows (CSOs) exist.

An April 2004 Consent Order with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) requires implementation of the City's 2002 three-phased Combined Sewer Overflow Long Term Control Plan, pursuant to its State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (SPDES) Permit. The Long Term Control Plan consists of a number of phased improvements to enable the City's wastewater conveyance and treatment facilities to handle the increased volume of combined sewage that would result from eliminating the existing overflows of combined sewage.

EPA issued a Categorical Exclusion (CATEX) from substantive environmental review requirements for implementing Phase I of the Long Term Control Plan on February 3, 2006. The Phase I work includes various improvements to the East Side Wastewater Treatment Facility (ESWTF) to increase the volume of combined sewage that can be treated by the facility. It will increase the capacity of the influent sewer, install new mechanical bar screens and chlorination/dechlorination equipment, add automatic sampling equipment to the overflow detention basin, a baffle to retain floatables during wet weather, and a pump to convey the contents of the basin to the treatment works once storm events have ended.

Proposed Action

Phase II of the Long Term Control Plan includes the following components, which are necessary to eliminate sewage overflows to the Oswego River and, thereby, improve water quality:

1. Installation of approximately 1,900 feet of 36" diameter gravity sewer, to convey peak flows from the existing Overflow Retention Facility along the Oswego River to the existing East Cayuga Street Pumping Station.
2. Increasing the pumping capacity of the East Cayuga Street Pumping Station from 1.5 million gallons per day to 11.5 million gallons per day.
3. Installation of approximately one mile of 20" diameter force main, to transport flows from the East Cayuga Street pumping station to the ESWTF.

All of the project's components will be installed in areas that have been previously disturbed by construction of roads, water lines, storm sewers, and other utilities.

Alternatives Considered

In addition to the proposed action, "No Action" was considered. This alternative would result in continued overflows of combined sewage to the Oswego River and Lake Ontario during wet weather. It would also be contrary to various federal, state, and local requirements mandating elimination of health hazards and bypasses of partially treated wastewater. Furthermore, the 2004 Consent Order with the NYSDEC requires the City to implement the proposed improvements at the facility to comply with its SPDES permit, and enable future phases of the control plan to be implemented. Consequently, "No Action" is not a viable option.

Criteria 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 "minor rehabilitation of existing facilities," and "actions which are solely directed toward...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 6.505(c)(1), 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; nor will it 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.