

*Section*



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

J. Mello, DEP-WFB  
W. Lawler, DEP-RMM  
Y. C... DEP-...

MAY 25 2005

Ronald C. Jackson, P.E.  
Blasland, Bouck and Lee, Inc.  
6723 Towpath Road  
P.O. Box 66  
Syracuse, New York 13214

Dear Mr. Jackson:

We have reviewed the information submitted for the City of Syracuse's Valley Drive Area Sewer Infrastructure Improvements Project, pursuant to the Environmental Protection Agency's regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 40 CFR Part 6, and have determined that the project qualifies for a categorical exclusion (CATEX) from substantive environmental review requirements. The project, which involves disconnecting existing stormwater catch basins from the sanitary sewer system and installation of storm sewers to convey this stormwater from the catch basins, is being partially funded through a federal Special Appropriation Act 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.

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,

*Kathleen C. Callahan*

Kathleen C. Callahan  
Acting Regional Administrator

Enclosure

cc: Mary Robison, P.E, City of Syracuse

## **ENCLOSURE**

### **Valley Road Area Sewer Improvements Project City of Syracuse, New York Special Appropriations Act Grant No. XP992580-01**

#### **Background**

The Valley Road project area is located in the southern part of the City of Syracuse, along the west side of a channelized segment of Onondaga Creek. For the most part, this 17 block area is presently served only by sanitary sewers. The few localized storm sewers serve only a small percentage of this area.

As a result, a significant number of storm sewer catch basins are currently connected directly to the sanitary sewer system, which is contrary to presently acceptable sewer design practice. Storm water flows from these stormwater catch basins cause the sanitary sewers to convey a large volume of combined sewage, which overloads the sanitary sewer system. The resulting quantity of combined sewage results in surcharging the sanitary sewers, street flooding, sewer backups, and overflows of combined sewage to Onondaga Creek and Hopper Brook. It also increases the volume of non-sanitary wastewater flows which must be treated at the Syracuse Metro Wastewater Treatment Facility, resulting in unnecessary treatment costs.

To rectify this situation, the existing stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure in this area of the City needs to be modified.

#### **Proposed Action**

To resolve the area's stormwater and sanitary sewer infrastructure problems, the City of Syracuse proposes to disconnect the stormwater catch basins from the sanitary sewer system, install approximately 7,300 linear feet of storm sewer to serve the area, and redirect the stormwater from the catch basins to the storm sewer system. The storm sewers will be installed within existing street rights-of-way. Where necessary to accommodate projected stormwater quantities, sections of existing storm water pipe will be replaced with pipe designed to accommodate anticipated volume of flow.

#### **Alternatives Considered**

In addition to the "Proposed Action," the "No Action" alternative was considered. "No Action" would continue the present practice of having the catch basins direct stormwater to the sanitary sewer system. It was rejected because it would not address the public health and water quality problems associated with overloading the sanitary sewers with combined sewage.

### 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 toward the 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.