UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

Amendment to the Categorical Exclusion
City of Bellflower, California
Water Infrastructure Improvement Projects
March 2011

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 awarded two grants in the total amount of $1,234,300 to the City of Bellflower, California, in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) section of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Housing and Urban Development, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Act, 2002 (P.L. 107-73) which authorized the use of the funds for the City of Bellflower for a water infrastructure project.

EPA Region 9's award of grant funding for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§4321-4370f. In accordance with Council on Environmental Quality regulation, 40 CFR §1508.4, a federal agency may categorically exclude an action from detailed environmental review, provided the proposed action meets certain criteria which EPA has previously determined indicate the undertaking will not have significant environmental impact and provided no extraordinary circumstances exist. EPA's categorical exclusions are set forth in 40 CFR Part 6.

EPA originally issued a Categorical Exclusion for the combined water infrastructure projects on March 2, 2009. The original project consisted of three general parts: upgrades to portions of the existing drinking water distribution pipeline, construction of a pipeline linking Bellflower with an additional source of drinking water serving the City of Bellflower, and construction of a new high-capacity water well. In a letter to EPA dated December 17, 2010, the City of Bellflower outlined the proposed changes to the scope of the project and requested EPA concurrence with its opinion that the changes did not require additional environmental review. In response, EPA requested the City provide a complete description of the project changes in an amendment to its original Environmental Information Document. The City of Bellflower provided the amendment discussing the project changes on February 8, 2011, with a revision on March 3, 2011.

After drilling the high-capacity water well, the City discovered during the well development that water production could be substantially increased, and is now proposing to increase the pumping capacity of the well from its original projection of 2,500 gallons per minute to 3,500 gallons per minute. This will require installation of a larger, above ground well pump rather than the below ground submersible pump. The City plans to utilize the new well to replace a total of sixteen old water wells with a combined capacity of approximately 3,500 gallons per minute: thirteen of these old wells are inactive, and three are planned to be taken out of service by the end of 2011. Because the potable water supply is an on-demand system, it will not be pumping 3,500 gpm at

all times, but it is sized so that it is capable of meeting peak demand. The well pump is expected to operate at a maximum 85% of its rated capacity to reduce equipment strain. The total annual volume the City is allowed to pump may not exceed a total of 1,380 acre-ft per year, limited by its available water rights. In addition, the City proposes to construct a concrete block structure of approximately 980 square feet, to house the pump and its appurtenances. The dimensions of the structure are approximately 22'W x 15' H x 45' D. The building was not originally envisioned, because the electrical control panel for the submersible pump and disinfection equipment were to have been enclosed by chain link fencing. Neither an above ground pump nor a building were included in the original plans. The City also proposes to replace an existing iron fence with an eight foot concrete block wall at the boundary between the structure, the adjacent rail corridor, and nearby residents. The location of the well project, which has not changed, remains within a City of Bellflower public works maintenance yard.

The pipe upgrade projects, the interconnection pipeline, and the drilling of the high-capacity water well have been essentially completed, and were covered by the original Categorical Exclusion. This amendment discusses only the proposed changes to the remainder of the project.

Eligibility for Categorical Exclusion

This amendment to the original Categorical Exclusion for the Bellflower water infrastructure project is intended only to address the changes brought about by the City's proposed increase in pumping capacity of the well. The well was drilled as part of the original project. However, during well development, the City discovered that the well was capable of producing considerably more water than had been projected during design. By increasing the pumping capacity of this well, Bellflower is planning to remove several old, smaller wells from service. The total annual volume of water Bellflower can pump is limited by its water rights but it will have greater ability to meet peak demands of its water system. To accommodate the increased pumping capacity, the City must use a larger, above-ground pump rather than the submersible pump as originally planned. The pump and its appurtenances are to be enclosed within a 980 square foot concrete block building. Locating the mechanical equipment within the masonry structure is expected to attenuate noise generated by the mechanical equipment and provide security. An eight foot concrete block fence will be erected to replace an existing iron fence separating the maintenance yard from the rail corridor and nearby residences. This eight foot fence will enhance aesthetics for the adjacent residents, and increase security for critical drinking water infrastructure. The project location is unchanged.

40 CFR §6.204 (a)(1)(ii) allows a project to be categorically excluded when the project involves:

> "Actions relating to existing infrastructure systems (such as sewer systems; drinking water supply systems; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) that involve minor upgrading, or minor expansion of system capacity or rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components (such as the sewer collection network and treatment system; the system to collect, treat, store and distribute drinking water; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) or construction of new minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property

> as existing facilities. This category does not include actions that: involve new or relocated discharges to surface or ground water; will likely result in the substantial increase in the volume or the loading of pollutant to the receiving water; will provide capacity to serve a population 30% greater than the existing population; are not supported by the state, or other regional growth plan or strategy; or directly or indirectly involve or relate to upgrading or extending infrastructure systems primarily for the purposes of future development."

EPA Region 9 has determined the proposed change to the project remains eligible for a categorical exclusion under 40 CFR §6.204 (a)(1)(ii), as the project involves functional replacement of drinking water system components, and minor upgrading and rehabilitation of existing drinking water infrastructure. This project is intended only to meet existing water needs because the increased well capacity is intended to replace several old wells while still meeting peak system demand. Bellflower may not exceed its existing water rights; therefore, this action is not expected to induce growth.

Extraordinary Circumstances

EPA Region 9 has reviewed the proposed changes to the original action to ascertain whether the proposed project involves any of the extraordinary circumstances identified at 40 CFR § 6.204(b)(1)-(10) and has determined:

(1) The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time. The City provided its residents a 30-day public review and comment period on the original environmental documents in April 2008. EPA requested the City provide analysis of the proposed project changes with regard to potential environmental effects. The City's amendment to the EID reviews growth inducement, light and glare, noise, and aesthetics as each applies to nearby residents. Between the building and residences is a rail corridor; the closest residence is located 159 feet from the proposed pump building. The sound of operating mechanical equipment is expected to be minimized by housing the pump within the building, and is not anticipated to exceed the City's noise limits. According to the City of Bellflower, if the City's building inspector determines additional attenuation measures are required, they will be provided. The masonry building and eight foot wall will each enhance the security of this critical drinking water infrastructure. The City's analysis concludes that the cumulative effect of the changes is negligible. Bellflower described the scope of the proposed changes to the project in a December 2010 Addendum to its 2009 Mitigated Negative Declaration. The City plans to hold a public hearing on the Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration once the design for the proposed changes is complete.

(2) The proposed action is not known or expected to have disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects on any community, including minority communities, low-income communities, or federally recognized Indian tribal communities. The original consultation and analysis remains applicable because the project location is unchanged. The original Categorical Exclusion is attached.

(3) The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat. The original consultation and analysis remains applicable because the project location is unchanged. The original Categorical Exclusion is attached.

(4) The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect national natural landmarks or any property with nationally significant historic, architectural, prehistoric, archeological, or cultural value, including but not limited to, property listed on or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The original consultation and analysis remains applicable because the project location is unchanged. The original Categorical Exclusion is attached.

(5) The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect environmentally important natural resource areas such as wetlands, floodplains, significant agricultural lands, aquifer recharge zones, coastal zones, barrier islands, wild and scenic rivers, and significant fish or wildlife habitat. The original consultation and analysis remains applicable because the project location is unchanged. The original Categorical Exclusion is attached.

(6) The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant adverse air quality effects. The environmental documents provided by the City stated that the project would comply with all Rules and Regulations of the South Coast Air Quality Management District and with all California emission standards. In addition, the City also plans to execute best management practices to minimize dust and vehicle exhaust fumes during construction.

(7) The proposed action is not known or expected to have a significant effect on the pattern and type of land use (industrial, commercial, agricultural, recreational, residential) or growth and distribution of population, including altering the character of existing residential areas, and is consistent with land use plans approved by a state, local government or federally recognized Indian tribe and federal land management plans. The City of Bellflower is essentially built-out; very little growth can occur in the future. This project is intended to meet existing peak system demand, and pumping is limited by annual water rights. This project is very unlikely to induce significant growth or affect land use. The project location remains within the existing City of Bellflower Public Works Maintenance Yard facility, such that the original consultation and analysis remains applicable. The original Categorical Exclusion is also attached.

(8) The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy about a potential environmental impact of the proposed action. The City provided residents a 30-day public review and comment period on its original environmental documents in April 2008. EPA requested the City provide analysis of the project change with regard to its environmental effects. The City's amendment to the EID reviews growth inducement, light and glare, noise, and visual aesthetics as each applies to its effect on nearby residents. The nearest residence is 159 feet from the proposed pump building. According to the City's analysis, the cumulative effect of the changes is negligible. Bellflower plans a public notification and hearing on its Addendum to the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the project once the design is complete and details are known.

(9) The proposed action is not known or expected to be associated with providing financial

assistance to a federal agency through an interagency agreement for a project that is known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts. The original Categorical Exclusion analysis remains applicable for the project, and is attached.

(10) The proposed action is not known or expected to conflict with federal, state, local government, or federally recognized Indian tribe environmental, resource protection, or land use laws or regulations. The original Categorical Exclusion analysis remains applicable for the project, and is attached.

Finding

EPA Region 9 finds the proposed action conforms to the category of actions eligible for exclusion from detailed environmental review under 40 CFR §6.204 (a)(1)(ii) and will not involve any extraordinary circumstances. Accordingly, EPA Region 9 will not prepare either an environmental impact statement or an environmental assessment for the proposed project. EPA Region 9 may revoke this categorical exclusion if changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion or if new evidence emerges which indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist or federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

Alexis Strauss
Director, Water Division

5 April 2011
Date