



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

NOV 13 2013

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

In accordance with the environmental review guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality found at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and with the use of the implementing environmental review procedures of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act" as guidance, the EPA has performed an environmental review of the following proposed action:

Camargo Wastewater Collection Project
Proposed by the Comision de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado (COMAPA)
Located in Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico

Estimated EPA Share: \$ 887,794

Estimated Local Share: \$ 814,046

The community of Camargo is located in the northwest area of the Mexican State of Tamaulipas. Residents do not have adequate wastewater collection or wastewater treatment infrastructure and use latrine pits for their waste. Many residents discharge untreated wastewater directly into streets and vacant land; compounding the public health and safety hazard for area residents. The lack of wastewater collection and treatment infrastructure in the area creates a potential source of surface and ground water contamination. In addition, odors from the latrines, cesspools, and untreated wastewater in the open-air canals permeate the area.

COMAPA proposes to install a wastewater collection system to serve Camargo. In total, 12,708 people will be served by the new wastewater collection system. The collected wastewater would flow from houses, via gravity, to wastewater pipeline and be conveyed to the Camargo WWTP. In total, 202 access points and 58,056 linear feet of new pipe will be added within the existing 50-foot right-of-way. Based on the population of the proposed service area, the project would generate wastewater at a rate of approximately 0.64 million gallons daily (MGD).

EPA Region 6 has performed an environmental review and assessment on the Environmental Information Document, and other supporting data, prepared for the proposed Camargo Wastewater Infrastructure Project. The environmental review and assessment process did not identify any potentially significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed action. The project individually, cumulatively over time, or in conjunction with other actions will not have a significant adverse effect on the quality of the environment. Accordingly, the EPA Region 6 has made a preliminary determination that the proposed project is not a major federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not warranted.

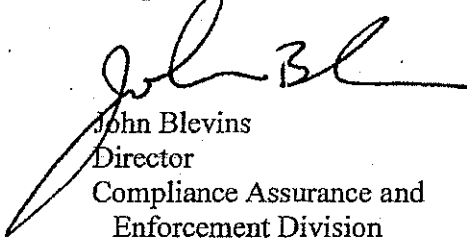
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Re: Camargo Wastewater
Infrastructure FNSI

Comments regarding this preliminary decision not to prepare an EIS and issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) may be submitted to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), 1445 Ross Avenue, Suite 1200, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733. All comments will be taken into consideration. No administrative action will be taken on this decision during the 30-day comment period. This preliminary decision, and the FNSI, will become final after the 30-day comment period expires if no new information is provided to alter this finding.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins
Director
Compliance Assurance and
Enforcement Division

Enclosure

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
for the
PROPOSED CAMARGO WASTEWATER COLLECTION PROJECT
TAMAULIPAS, MEXICO

1.0 GENERAL PROJECT INFORMATION

1.1 Purpose and Need for Proposed Action

The Fiscal Year 2010 Appropriations Act for the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) included special Congressional funding for wastewater construction projects. The Comision de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado (COMAPA) of Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico was selected to receive appropriations funding support from the EPA for the rehabilitation of the Camargo wastewater treatment infrastructure, and construction of new treatment infrastructure in Colonia Villanueva, Colonia La Mision, Ejido Gonzaleno, and Colonia El Sauz. Currently, the areas do not have adequate wastewater collection or treatment infrastructures, and residents discharge waste into aging latrines, septic systems, and lagoons. The new wastewater treatment infrastructure would provide wastewater treatment capacity for approximately 12,708 people in Camargo and the surrounding Colonias.

The Municipality of Camargo is located in the northwest area of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, bordering Starr County in the State of Texas to the north. The municipal territory of Camargo, Tamaulipas, comprises 361.83 square miles.

1.2 Proposed Action

The COMAPA proposes to improve the existing wastewater collection system in the City of Camargo, Tamaulipas. The proposed action also includes the construction of new wastewater collection systems for unserved areas located at the outskirts of the City of Camargo. Current areas of the City lacking wastewater collection and treatment services are Colonia Villanueva, Colonia La Mision, Ejido Gonzaleño, and Colonia El Sauz. The new wastewater collection system for Camargo would be designed to serve the current population base and the projected 20-year population growth.

Existing pipeline improvements and line replacements to Camargo's main collector and force main would add 13,449 linear feet of polyvinyl chloride (PVC) pipe ranging from 12-24 inches in diameter. New sewer line installations to the City's Colonias would total 44,193 linear feet of 8-inch diameter pipe. New 6-inch sewer service connections would be installed for gravity flow from the households, to the laterals, and ultimately to the city main collector to be sent through the force main to the WWTP. All improvements, old-line replacements, and new installations of wastewater system pipeline would occur within existing 50-foot wide road rights of way. In total, the system would include 202 access points (manholes). The estimated total cost of the proposed wastewater collection system would be approximately US\$1,701,840.

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The sewer system will be designed to ensure compliance with the current Mexican regulations with respect to wastewater effluent conveyance and discharge into Camargo's proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). Total capacity for the sewer system has been designed to handle an average flow of 0.68 million gallons daily (MGD). Daily average residential wastewater flow would be approximately 0.64 MGD, assuming a daily average wastewater production rate of 52.8 gallons per capita daily.

Construction activities related to the preferred alternative include trenching, pipe laying, soil stockpiling, covering pipes with stockpiled soil, and operation of construction equipment. Equipment needed for construction of wastewater collection networks would likely be acquired in Mexico, and construction labor would be provided by companies in Mexico. Construction activities would likely occur Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Alternatives Considered by the Applicant

Three alternatives were considered for the proposed project. No other alternatives were considered feasible or practical for improving the wastewater infrastructure needs in Camargo and the surrounding Colonias.

2.1.1 Alternative 1 – No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no wastewater collection system infrastructure improvements would be constructed in the project area. The use of inadequate latrines and septic systems would continue. Untreated and improperly treated wastewater would continue to enter the environment directly, resulting in continued public health concerns as well as contamination of surface water, stormwater, and groundwater. Groundwater currently used as potable water could become contaminated due to continued use of malfunctioning septic systems for wastewater disposal. The current discharge would continue to violate both Mexican and U.S. water quality/discharge standards for fecal coliform.

2.1.2 Alternative 2 – Preferred Alternative – Conventional Gravity Sewer System Using PVC

Alternative 2 consists of the expansion and rehabilitation of the existing wastewater collection system for Camargo by the upgrading of main collector and the rerouting of its force main. In addition, this alternative includes the installation of a new wastewater collection system for La Mision, Ejido Gonzaleño and Colonia El Sauz. The sewer system will be designed to ensure compliance with the current Mexican regulations for wastewater effluent conveyance and discharge into Camargo's proposed WWTP. Total capacity for the sewer system is designed to handle an average flow of 0.68 MGD.

The proposed wastewater collection system improvements would provide near total coverage to the current population within the Project Area. Alternative 2 will add more than 17,700 linear meters (58,056 LF) of new sewer lines to the existing collection system. The total cost of Alternative 2 is \$1,701,840.

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2.1.3 Alternative 3 – Conventional Gravity Sewer System Using Concrete

Improvements to the wastewater collection system under alternative 3 would be the same as those under alternative 2 except that wastewater collection pipelines would be manufactured out of reinforced concrete material instead of PVC. Alternative 3 does not include development of wastewater reuse projects, or improvements to Camargo's existing wastewater treatment plant. The total cost of Alternative 3 is \$1,158,170.

Although the PVC pipe results in a higher initial investment in comparison with concrete, PVC piping systems material affords a range of useful properties that makes it more versatile than concrete.

2.2 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Study

No other alternatives are considered to provide feasible or practical solutions to improve wastewater infrastructure in Camargo.

3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The Municipality of Camargo is located in the northwest area of the Mexican state of Tamaulipas, bordering Starr County in the State of Texas to the north.

The area of concern is located within the Tamaulipan biotic province. This province encompasses almost 200 miles between the coast and the deciduous woodlands on the slopes of the Sierra Madre Oriental and extends into Mexico at least as far as the Rio Soto la Marina, Tamaulipas and the Monterrey region of eastern Nuevo Leon. Elevation increases northwesterly from sea level near the Gulf Coast to a base of about 300 m (1,000 ft) near the northern boundary of the province, from which a few hills or mountains protrude.

The municipal seat of Camargo, Ciudad Camargo, is located at 26° 18' 33" north latitude and 98° 50' 08" west longitude and has a population of 7,984. The municipal territory of Camargo, Tamaulipas, comprises 361.83 square miles and has a population of 14,933. The area of concern, or the area that would be affected by implementing the proposed action, was defined by the BECC to be limited to an area within a 6.2-mile diameter, which is approximately within a 3.1-mile radius of Ciudad Camargo. The project is located within one-hundred kilometers of the U.S./Mexico border.

4.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

4.1 Air Quality

Air quality in a given location is determined by the concentration of various pollutants in the atmosphere. The EPA establishes national ambient air quality standards (NAAQS) for criteria pollutants. NAAQS represent maximum levels of background pollution limits necessary to protect human health. In Mexico, the Secretaría de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) establishes normas ambientales para aire, which are Mexico's equivalent to U.S. air quality standards. Odor sources near the proposed project site include latrines and untreated wastewater discharges. Odors from untreated wastewater are noticeable adjacent to canals, and

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possibly greater distances depending on weather conditions. The city and all surrounding project areas are in attainment for criteria pollutants PM_{10} , CO, and Ozone; thus, the area of concern meets the NAAQS Standards for the criteria pollutants designated in the Clean Air Act.

Under the no action alternative, construction activities that result in particulate matter and hydrocarbon emissions would not be initiated because improvements associated with implementation of the proposed action would not occur. Air resources in the area of concern would not be impacted by implementation of the No-Action Alternative.

The primary contaminants of concern for construction projects are carbon monoxide and particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}). Carbon monoxide emissions from construction equipment would occur intermittently during the one-year term of construction activities associated with improvements to the wastewater collection system. Operational activities would involve minimal carbon monoxide emissions from service vehicles. Odorous gases emanating from the replaced sewer lines would not contain any of the contaminants of concern and, therefore, would not have an adverse impact on human health.

Construction activity is not expected to result in significant increases in the emissions of carbon monoxide and other primary pollutants (i.e., lead, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, or ozone) because of the small number of construction vehicles that would be involved and the limited and temporary nature of the construction activities. Construction activities under the Preferred Alternative may temporarily increase soil erosion and dust emissions; however, dust suppression techniques such as watering, and application of soil stabilizers would be used to minimize the fugitive dust. Air quality may be improved under the Preferred Action Alternative by elimination of odors emanating from existing septic tanks and cesspools as residents are connected to the wastewater collection system. Construction and operational activities associated with the Preferred Alternative would have no significant impact to air quality within the area of concern.

4.2 Noise

Noise is defined as unwanted sound or, more specifically, as any sound that is undesirable because it interferes with communication, is intense enough to damage hearing or is otherwise annoying. Human responses to noise vary depending on the type and characteristics of the noise, the distance between the noise source and the receptor, receptor sensitivity, and time of day.

The day-night average sound level (L_{dn}) is the energy-averaged sound level measured over a 24-hour period, with a 10 dB penalty added to noise occurring between 10 p.m. and 7 a.m. The 10 dB penalty is intended to compensate for the generally lower background noise and increased annoyance associated with noise during the quieter nighttime hours. L_{dn} is the preferred noise metric of the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, US Department of Transportation, Federal Aviation Administration, US EPA, the US Department of Veterans Affairs, and the US Department of Defense. The noise environment at the proposed project site in Camargo is characteristic of low- to medium-density residential areas.

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Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would involve trenching, soil movement, pipe installation, and ground excavation. Noise generation during construction would be characteristic of the use of construction equipment. Installation of the proposed wastewater collection and conveyance infrastructure in the project area would occur in residential areas.

Under the No Action Alternative, no new infrastructure for wastewater treatment distribution would be implemented. No construction activity would occur under this alternative, and no changes in the existing noise environment would occur. Therefore, no direct or indirect short-term or long-term noise-generating activity or associated impacts would occur in the US or Mexico.

Construction activities would likely occur from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Nearby residential receptors would be exposed to short-term construction noise, but no extended disruption of normal activities is expected. Further, provisions would be included in construction plans that require the contractor to make every reasonable effort to minimize construction noise through abatement measures; including proper maintenance of muffler systems. Minimal adverse short-term impacts on the noise environment at and adjacent to the project site would be expected to occur with implementation of the Proposed Action. However, any impacts would be temporary and would not be considered significant. Since no construction would occur in the US and construction noise generated by the Proposed Action would be temporary and would not be audible in the US; no significant short-term direct or indirect construction noise impacts are anticipated to occur in the US under either of the action alternatives.

Long-term noise associated with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative would be minimal as the wastewater collection and conveyance system would operate passively under gravity flow. Therefore, under implementation of the Preferred Alternative, no long-term direct or indirect operational noise would occur in the US, and long-term direct or indirect operational noise in Mexico would be negligible.

4.3 Floodplains

Under the Proposed Action, COMAPA would construct infrastructure to accommodate wastewater flows, as well as rehabilitate existing infrastructure in the proposed project area. The proposed project area is entirely within Mexico, and no construction would occur within the US. Construction would be limited to installation of collection and conveyance networks and support infrastructure along existing roadways and previously disturbed areas within Mexico. No construction activity would occur in the US; therefore, no direct or indirect impacts to floodplains in the US would occur under implementation of the Preferred Alternative.

If the No Action Alternative were selected, no construction or long-term operation of a wastewater collection system would occur in the proposed project area. No activities would result in direct or indirect impacts on floodplains. The funding recipient is responsible for coordination with the Comision Internacional De Limites Y Aguas (CILA), and must adhere to CILA regulations and recommendations regarding floodplains for the duration of the project.

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4.4 Wetlands

No natural wetlands exist in or near the proposed project area. Under the Preferred Alternative, no construction would occur in the US. Construction activities would be limited to previously developed or disturbed areas and would not result in discharge of stormwater flow, or result in increased sedimentation in US waters or wetlands. Since no wetlands are near the proposed project area; no direct or indirect effects on wetlands in the US or Mexico would occur under implementation of the Preferred Alternative or Alternative 2.

Under the No Action Alternative, no new infrastructure for wastewater collection would be constructed or improved. Therefore, no impacts would occur under the No Action Alternative.

4.5 Ground Water Resources

The Gulf Coast aquifer is the largest aquifer in the southeastern part of Texas; including the lower Rio Grande Valley on the border with Mexico. It is the main source of ground water for this region. In addition, the Yegua-Jackson aquifer is an important source of water in parts of the Gulf Coast Area. Sources of groundwater in Camargo are from Quaternary age alluvial deposits of the Rio Grande and from the Oakville Sandstone of Miocene Age. The alluvium deposits that border the Rio Grande comprise the Chicot aquifer, which is a unit of the Gulf Coast aquifer.

Untreated wastewater infiltration from the sewer system has been detected throughout the city's wastewater main collector, potentially including manholes. Implementation of the No Action Alternative would allow this infiltration to increase because of the expected increase in population and continued degradation of the existing wastewater collection system. The current residences not connected to the sewer system would continue to discharge wastewater into the cesspools or failing septic tanks. In the long-term, implementation of the No-Action Alternative would be expected to result in potentially significant negative impacts to groundwater in the area of concern because of leaking wastewater from the existing wastewater collection pipelines, in particular the deteriorated 18-inch diameter city's main collector.

The implementation of the Preferred Action Alternative would provide service to residences lacking connection to the wastewater collection system, thereby avoiding potential groundwater contamination by fecal coli form and other parasites, resulting from the continued and increased use of cesspools for wastewater disposal. In the short-term, groundwater along the floodplain of the Rio San Juan and Rio Grande primarily used for human consumption in the Municipality of Camargo and neighboring communities would not be impacted with the implementation of this alternative. In the long-term, the implementation of the preferred alternative would eliminate the discharge of untreated effluent into the groundwater used as a potable water supply in the area of concern. Significant positive impacts to groundwater would be expected with the implementation of the preferred alternative.

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In administering the Sole Source Aquifer program (SSA) under Section 1424 of the Safe Drinking Water Act, EPA performs evaluations of projects utilizing federal dollars for potential impacts to designated SSA's. The project does not lie within the boundaries of a designated SSA, and therefore, does not require review under the SSA program.

4.6 Surface Water Resources

Surface water resources located within the area of concern are limited to the Rio San Juan and the Rio Grande. The SEMARNAT sets surface water quality regulations for the final discharge of wastewater to all water receptors nationwide. This water quality regulation is listed in Mexico Norm NOM-001-SEMARNAT-1996, which establishes the maximum permitted levels of contaminants in wastewater that can be discharged into water bodies or properties in Mexico.

With the no action alternative, current operation of the wastewater collection system would remain the same. Approximately 24% of Camargo's population residing in Villanueva, La Mision, Ejido Gonzaleño, and Colonia El Sauz, have no access to a wastewater collection system, and would continue to discharge wastewater into cesspools or local waterbodies, with the potential of reaching the Rio San Juan and eventually, the Rio Grande. In the long-term, the number of new cesspools and the size of the existing cesspools would increase because of the expected increase in population. In addition, an already failing wastewater main collector in Ciudad Camargo would increase raw sewage flows, with the potential of reaching the Rio San Juan and the Rio Grande.

Construction and operation activities associated with the preferred alternative would not have direct impacts to the Rio Grande. All construction activities would occur along the existing wastewater collection system network ROW. Hay bales or silt fences would be placed along the edge of the construction ROW to ensure that siltation and subsequent increases in TSS would not result from construction activities. The implementation of the preferred alternative would have a positive effect on water resources, as it would improve the local surface waters. Transboundary impacts to local and regional water resources would be positive because of the implementation of the preferred alternative.

Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 tasks the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) with overseeing any action that may affect navigable waters of the United States. USACE reviewed the project for potential impacts to navigable waters of the U.S., and concluded the project would not impact these resources. The National Park Service (NPS) administers the National Wild and Scenic River Program, and in a 2012 letter, the NPS determined that the project did not require review for impacts to Wild and Scenic Rivers. The International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) assess impacts to the shared water resources of Mexico and the United States. The funding recipient is responsible for continued coordination with IBWC, and must adhere to any water quality requirements, permitting processes, or recommendations put forth by the agency for the duration of the project.

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4.7 Biological Resources

The areas of Ciudad Camargo proposed for wastewater collection system improvements are developed, and native vegetation is virtually non-existent. The original vegetation, however, consisted of mid and short grasses, as well as undesirable bushes and invasive plants.

In Mexico, the SEMARNAT administers laws affecting the environment, including threatened and endangered species (T&E). Norm NOM-059-ECOL-2001 identifies four categories for status classification: endangered species, threatened species, special protection species, and species possibly extinct from wildlife communities. Comparable to the USFWS and TPWD, the SEMARNAT prohibits the taking, possession, transportation, or sale of any of the plant or animal species designated by state law as T&E without the issuance of a permit.

The USFWS has oversight of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and has recommended not disturbing vegetation during the general nesting period of March through August. Conversely, a survey of areas proposed for disturbance could be performed for nesting birds immediately prior to the construction activities. Any nest discovered that may be disturbed or destroyed must be reported to the USFWS for further guidance. The USFWS also recommended that care be given not to disturb native trees in the project area, and requested that all landscaping associated with the project use native vegetation species that are drought-tolerant, adaptable, and less water consuming.

With implementation of the no action alternative, operation of the existing deficient wastewater collection and treatment system in Camargo, and lack of wastewater collection and treatment system for Villanueva, La Mision, Ejido Gonzaleño, and Colonia El Sauz, would remain the same. Vegetation, wildlife, and T & E communities in the area of concern would not be impacted with the implementation of the No-Action Alternative because the construction activities associated with the proposed action would not occur.

Implementation of the preferred alternative would involve the potential loss of vegetation. In Ciudad Camargo and its adjacent communities, the vegetation communities within the proposed ROW for the wastewater collection system occur primarily along the border of road ROWs. However, some construction ROWs in urban areas of Ciudad Camargo would involve wastewater collection system connections to houses, which could potentially affect landscaped and disturbed natural vegetation communities. However, most of the construction activities would occur in road ROWs.

Implementation of preferred alternative would involve the potential loss of wildlife habitat during construction and operation activities. Wildlife communities in Camargo are limited to shrubs and trees that have been planted during development of the area. Neo-tropical birds may use some of this habitat during migration or for nesting.

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Construction activities could affect nesting migratory birds. Construction activities would be scheduled during the non-breeding season, and would avoid removal of suitable nesting structures. Other wildlife communities present would not be affected by habitat loss due to the improvements to the wastewater collection system that would occur in areas that have been disturbed by previous development. Some mobile animals would escape to areas of similar habitat, and sedentary animals that utilize burrows (e.g., amphibians, lizards, and small mammals) could be potentially affected during the construction. However, wildlife numbers are relatively low at the pipeline transmission ROW.

Long-term or short-term direct/indirect impacts to wildlife communities would be minimal. No significant impacts would occur to wildlife with the implementation of the Preferred Alternative. In the long-term, aquatic communities in the Rio San Juan and consequently in the Rio Grande would benefit because of the improvement in the water quality of the wastewater discharge. Implementation of the Preferred Alternative would provide positive impacts to aquatic communities in the Rio Grande and its tributary, the Rio San Juan.

Although endangered species, threatened species, species of concern, sensitive species, and special category (plant) species are unlikely to be found in the area of concern, some listed migratory bird species could occur temporarily. As a mitigation measure, all construction personnel shall attend an environmental protection briefing prior to working on any construction activities with the purpose to familiarize workers with the recognition and protection measures for sensitive wildlife habitats. In addition, a qualified biologist shall conduct preconstruction surveys to identify the number, type, and location of special-status bird within the project area. Structures and habitat that provide hibernacula, nursery colonies, nest or roosting habitat would remain, and other protective measures, such as construction start-date to consider migratory birds. Survey of nesting migratory birds shall be identified during preconstruction surveys.

Negative impacts would not be anticipated with the implementation of the Preferred Action Alternative because all of the proposed activities would occur in urban areas road ROWs or in areas previously disturbed by agricultural and other farming activities.

The applicant made a "no effect" determination with respect to threatened and endangered species, and the USFWS agreed, by letter dated August 21, 2012, that Section (7)(a)(2) of the Endangered Species Act consultation was satisfied.

4.8 Cultural Resources

Camargo was founded on March 5, 1749 in dedication of Nuestra Señora de Santa Ana de Camargo by Jose de Escandon during his colonization campaign through the coasts of Mexico. By 1757, the village had 637 inhabitants, including its governor Blas Maria de la Garza. During that time, Camargo was one of the most prosperous towns in the region of New Santander (Tamaulipas and southern Texas); its economic activities consisted of raising cattle and commerce with the border communities with the addition of some nearby ranches and the San Agustin Mission, the population reached 1,008 inhabitants by 1770. By the 19th century, Camargo averaged 4,017 inhabitants, caused mainly by the increased trade through ports in the Tamaulipas border.

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Construction activities associated with the proposed action would not occur with implementation of the no action alternative. As a result, cultural resources in the area of concern would not be impacted. Since the proposed construction areas for the wastewater collection system are located within Camargo, which is previously disturbed, it is unlikely that cultural remains are present on the surface. However, the potential for subsurface cultural remains exists in both urban and rural areas. Construction activities that require subsurface excavation would include the stipulation that if any subsurface cultural materials are identified, work should cease and the appropriate personnel from the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia (INAH) to determine the appropriate course of action.

Impacts to cultural resources in the U.S. are not anticipated because all of the construction activities associated with the implementation of this alternative would occur only in Mexico. No impacts would be expected to occur to cultural resources with the implementation of the preferred Action Alternative.

4.9 Environmental Justice and Protection of Children

The community of Camargo does not have a wastewater treatment system and the direct discharge of wastewater into the environment contributes to increased human contact with waterborne pathogens. Children and low-income populations may suffer disproportionate impacts from environmental health and safety risks due to their close proximity to environmental hazards.

Under the No Action Alternative, no new infrastructure for wastewater collection would be constructed or improved in the proposed project area. Implementation of this alternative could be considered adverse with respect to public health since it would not address issues associated with the generation and spread of waterborne disease.

The Proposed Action would result in positive impacts for children, minority populations, and low-income populations within the proposed project area in Mexico. Implementation of a wastewater collection system would reduce the likelihood of surface and groundwater contamination and spread of disease associated with lack of sewage collection. No adverse impacts on children and minority and low-income populations would occur under implementation of the preferred alternative.

4.10 Energy

To comply with Executive Order (EO) 13514, the project has been evaluated for its potential to impact the US federal government's goal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption.

The No Action Alternative would provide no improvements in the wastewater infrastructure in Camargo. There would therefore be no changes in energy resources in the U.S. or Mexico. Implementation of the preferred alternative is not expected to result in adverse impacts on energy usage by federal or other facilities. Under this alternative, wastewater would

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flow via gravity to the existing wastewater conveyance system where it would be conveyed to the Camargo WWTP. Minimal increases in energy use would be required to treat the additional flow associated with the project and no new energy infrastructure would be required to accommodate the project.

4.11 Cumulative Impacts

The No-Action Alternative would not contribute to a general improvement in municipal and sanitation services compared to what is currently taking place in the area of concern and also downstream throughout the Rio Grande and its associated habitat.

The cumulative effects of the preferred alternative are to increase the quality of municipal services. The preferred alternative would provide positive trans-boundary impacts. This would occur due to improved water quality conditions in combination with other wastewater treatment infrastructure projects along the U.S/Mexico border. Upgrades to the wastewater collection infrastructure would reduce the contamination of potable water and local water bodies from leaky pipelines. The proposed enhancements will indirectly improve the water quality in the Rio San Juan and the Rio Grande even as the contiguous population and the amount of wastewater discharged continues to grow. The implementation of the preferred alternative will increase water quality within the region.

4.12 Unavoidable Adverse Impacts

Implementation of either action alternative would result only in temporary, adverse impacts such as fugitive dust emissions, vehicle emissions, noise, traffic disruption, and soil disturbance. Unavoidable adverse impacts associated with the no-action alternative include discharge of untreated wastewater into the environment, and the risk of contamination of groundwater and surface water.

4.13 Relationship Between Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity

In the short term, implementation of the action alternatives would result in temporary, adverse impacts such as fugitive dust emissions, vehicle emissions, noise, traffic disruption, and soil erosion. Long-term effects of the action alternatives include efficient wastewater collection and conveyance, resulting in protection of water resources, improved public health, quality of life, and socioeconomic benefits. The no action alternative would result in adverse impacts on both short- and long-term productivity from continued poor water quality and public health. These impacts would be exacerbated by population growth in the project area.

4.14 Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

If the preferred alternative is implemented, irreversible and irretrievable resources committed to the project include energy used to construct the WWTP and pipeline, depreciation in value of the equipment used in construction, monies expended toward workforce expenses during construction, and loss of land and soil resources within the footprint of the WWTP.

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5.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The projects technical and financial information was available to the public for review by holding two public meetings in Camargo. The first public meeting resulted in a community committee forming to develop a communication strategy. During the second meeting, a presentation of the project was made to the community. The information from the meetings were published in a subsequent newspaper notice. Additionally, a survey form was distributed to citizens to determine their familiarity and acceptance of the project. Approximately 124 residents responded to the project survey; with 98 percent indicating they understood the project and were in support.

During the process of conducting the environmental review and preparing this Environmental Assessment for the project, coordination has been conducted with all required resource protection agencies and offices to solicit and incorporate their initial review and comments. Copies of this Environmental Assessment will be provided to those agencies and offices for their final review and comments. Other interested parties may request a copy of the Environmental Assessment and/or Environmental Information Document by contacting Keith Hayden, via telephone at (214) 665-2133, electronically at hayden.keith@epa.gov, or in writing from the EPA, Office of Planning and Coordination (6EN-XP), 1445 Ross Avenue, Dallas, Texas 75202-2733.

6.0 RECOMMENDATION

Based upon completion of this Environmental Assessment, and a detailed review of the Environmental Information Document for the project, it has been determined that construction activities are considered to be environmentally sound. Therefore, it is recommended a Finding of No Significant Impact be issued.

7.0 LIST OF AGENCIES CONTACTED BY BECC

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. National Park Service
Federal Emergency Management Agency
International Boundary and Water Commission
Natural Resource Conservation Service
North American Development Bank
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
Comisión Internacional de Límites y Aguas