



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Expansion of Drinking Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Services to Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio and Surrounding Areas
Nogales, Sonora, Mexico**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the Water and Wastewater Utility of Nogales, Sonora, Mexico (Organismo Operador Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado y Saneamiento [OOMAPAS]) to expand their drinking water distribution and wastewater collection systems to unserved areas within and around Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio (Donaldo Colosio) on the southwestern side of Nogales, Sonora.

U.S. EPA Region 9's consideration of 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 NEPA, Council of Environmental Quality Regulations at 40 CFR §§1500.1–1508.28, and U.S. EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, U.S. EPA Region 9 has prepared a supplemental environmental assessment (SEA), dated June 2013, describing the potential environmental impacts associated with, and the alternatives to, the proposed project. The 2013 SEA expands the project scope identified in the June 2009 *Environmental Assessment for Drinking Water Distribution Expansion to Un-served Areas Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio, Nogales, Sonora, Mexico* (Colosio Drinking Water EA). Additionally, the 2013 SEA incorporates by reference the May 2009 SEA for the *Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant and Conveyance System Construction Nogales, Sonora, Mexico* (Los Alisos Wastewater SEA) which evaluated the potential environmental impacts associated with expansion of the wastewater collection system to Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas.

After careful review and consideration, the U.S. EPA has determined that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment. This finding of no significant impact (FONSI) documents this determination.

Project Location and Description

The proposed project is located in the Municipality of Nogales, in the north central area of the Mexican state of Sonora. Nogales abuts the international border and shares its northern boundary with Nogales, Arizona. The proposed project lies within Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas, on the southwestern side of Nogales, approximately 2-5 miles south of the border.

Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

The purpose and scope of the 2013 SEA is twofold. The first is to supplement the 2009 *Colosio Drinking Water EA*, which evaluated the potential environmental consequences of providing drinking water services to approximately 800 unserved residences in Donaldo Colosio. The 2013 SEA addresses an expanded project scope to provide centralized drinking water services to parts of five additional colonias: Flores Magnon, Las Torres, Las Primavera, Jardines de la Montaña, and Restro. The revised project will bring water distribution services to an additional 1,600 homes that were not considered in the original *Colosio Drinking Water EA*. In total 2,400 homes will receive drinking water service through the proposed project. Currently, these homes rely on hauled water deliveries for drinking water.

The second purpose of the 2013 SEA is to incorporate by reference, the prior environmental evaluation of expanding wastewater collection and treatment to residences in and around Donaldo Colosio. The environmental impacts of new wastewater service to the proposed project area were evaluated in 2009 *Los Alisos Wastewater SEA*. The proposed project will bring wastewater service to an estimated 4,000 homes in Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas.

Environmental Consequences

Currently, the Nogales water distribution system reaches an estimated 60% of the population of Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas. The remaining population relies on drinking water hauled by truck, a practice that is subject to significant risk of contamination in the delivery and storage of drinking water. The delivered water is often not enough to support the population's drinking water needs. The proposed project will provide drinking water services to approximately 2,400 residences in Donaldo Colosio and the surrounding area. Project design includes installation of a water distribution system network of 29,679 linear meters of 2 to 20-inch pipe.

An estimated 50% of the wastewater generated in Donaldo Colosio is collected and sent to the Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) for treatment and disposal to the Rio Los Alisos. The remaining wastewater is either disposed of in cesspools before entering the environment or is discharged directly to the environment as raw sewage. With the lack of sufficient wastewater collection and treatment, there is a risk to human health with the potential exposure to untreated sewage. Furthermore, the discharge of untreated wastewater contributes to groundwater and surface water contamination both in Mexico and in areas around the Nogales Wash and Santa Cruz River in Arizona. The proposed project will collect an approximately 1.7 MGD of wastewater from an estimated 4,000 homes and convey it for treatment at the Los Alisos WWTP.

After carefully considering the regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors as described in the 2013 SEA, U.S. EPA Region 9 has not identified any significant impacts to the environment that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

Public Review

The SEA and the unsigned FONSI were made available for public review and comment at: www.epa.gov/region9/nepa/epa-generated. A public notice of the proposed project was also included in the *Nogales International* newspaper on August 2, 2013. The U.S. EPA did not receive any comments prior to the close of the public comment period on August 27, 2013.

Finding

Based on the information contained in the SEA, and after the opportunity for public comment, the U.S. EPA has determined the proposed project will not result in significant impacts to the environment and an environmental impact statement is not required. This FONSI is final upon signature. The U.S. EPA will not recirculate this FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request.



Jane Diamond
Director, Water Division

September 19, 2013

Date