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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Rehabilitation of Sewer Lines within the City of Mexicali, Baja California, Mexico

May 30, 2013

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Mexicali (CESPM) for the rehabilitation of sewer lines within the communities of Loma Linda and Esperanza located within the City of Mexicali (Mexicali).

EPA Region 9's award of a grant 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 EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, EPA Region 9 has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) describing the potential environmental impacts associated with, and the alternatives to, the proposed project. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) documents EPA Region 9's decision that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Project Location and Description

Mexicali is located within the United States (U.S.)-Mexico border region abutting the international boundary just south of the City of Calexico in Imperial County, California. The *border region* is defined as the bi-national area that extends approximately 62 miles (mi)/100 kilometers (km) north into the U.S. and approximately 186 mi/300 km south into Mexico along the length of the international boundary. Mexicali has a population of 689,775, according to the 2010 Mexican census, while the population of the entire metropolitan area (as well the municipality) is 936,826. Mexicali is the second largest city in Baja California.

CESPM is the municipal agency responsible for the construction and maintenance of water and wastewater service throughout the City. CESPM divides Mexicali into four service areas for purposes of water distribution and wastewater collection. These service areas are referred to as Mexicali I, II, III, and IV. The proposed project discussed in this EA is located in the Mexicali I service area. Wastewater collected in the Mexicali I service area is treated at the Zaragoza Wastewater Treatment Plant and discharged to the New River. The New River runs through the Mexicali I service area and into the U.S.

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The wastewater collection infrastructure within the Mexicali I service area is aging. As a result, pipeline breaks occur resulting in untreated wastewater runoff contaminating area groundwater and impacting surface water quality. This is further exacerbated during emergency repairs to the Mexicali I wastewater collection system when untreated wastewater flows are sometimes diverted directly to the New River. Contact with raw wastewater has a risk to human health. Wastewater discharges from the areas of Loma Linda and Esperanza to the Mexicali wastewater collection system are estimated to be 1.5 liters per second (lps) and 5 lps respectively.

Purpose and Need for the Project

The purpose and need for the proposed action is to replace aging wastewater collection infrastructure within Mexicali's areas Loma Linda and Esperanza. Failing wastewater collection infrastructure causes potentially harmful impacts to human health and the environment.

The proposed action is to replace documented deteriorated or collapsing wastewater lines with the installation of approximately 2,300 meters of sewer lines in Loma Linda and 7,400 meters of sewer lines in Esperanza. The proposed project is estimated to benefit 2,568 residents.

Environmental Consequences

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes the environmental impacts of the proposed action. After considering a wide range of regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors, the EA did not identify any significant impacts to the environment that would result from the implementation of the proposed project.

Public Review

EPA made the EA and the unsigned FONSI available for public review at http://www.epa.gov/usmexicoborder/infrastructure and at the office of EPA Region 9 (75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, California, 94105-3901). Notice of the proposed project and the public comment period was published in the Imperial Valley Press. EPA did not receive any public comments on the EA or the unsigned FONSI prior to the close of the public comment period on May 15, 2013.

Finding

Based upon the information contained in the EA, and after an opportunity for public comment, 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. EPA will not recirculate this FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request.

for Jane Diamond
Director, Water Division

6/7/13
Date