



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

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

**Tijuana River Diversion Rehabilitation  
For the City of Tijuana, Mexico  
September 2021**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 intends to approve the award of Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant funds to the City Tijuana, Mexico, for the rehabilitation of lift stations PBCILA, PB1A, and PB1B, part of the Tijuana River diversion system, as well as the construction of a new Tijuana River intake. All components are located in the City of Tijuana, Mexico.

EPA Region 9's approval to award grant funds 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**

The City of Tijuana is within the larger municipality of Tijuana and covers an area of approximately 538 square miles. It contains the municipal delegations of San Antonio de los Buenos, Playas de Tijuana, Centro, Sánchez Taboada, La Mesa de Tijuana, Cerro Colorado, La Presa, Centenario, and Mesa de Otay. The City of Tijuana is connected to the San Ysidro district of southern San Diego in the United States by the San Ysidro and Otay Mesa Border Crossing Stations.

The project consists of the rehabilitation lift stations PBCILA, PB1A and PB1B, and incorporates the construction of a new, expanded Tijuana River intake. The new intake will aid in the elimination of Tijuana River dry-weather flows at 25 mgd and will supplement efforts to eliminate untreated discharges to the river. Together with the rehabilitations of PBCILA, PB1A, and PB1B, the project will help protect public health and the environment on both sides of the border.

**Purpose and Need for Proposed Project**

The proposed action will improve the wastewater diversion system in Tijuana and will result in mitigation of transboundary wastewater flows entering the United States and improvement in sanitary conditions within the City of Tijuana. A 2017 Comprehensive Wastewater Treatment and Reuse Plan prepared by the Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tijuana (CESPT) found numerous areas of the wastewater system in need of improvement and affected by significant deterioration, facing imminent failure. Rehabilitation measures and construction of additional infrastructure will reduce the risk of lift station failures that may result in untreated or inadequately treated wastewater discharges. If these discharges

reach the Tijuana River and flow north into the United States, beaches in San Diego, Imperial Beach, Coronado, and other coastal cities will become contaminated. In many cases local governments are forced to close them through much of the year due to public health concerns. Mexican beaches face a similar scenario when discharges flow west towards Playas de Tijuana and Rosarito, Baja California, Mexico.

Tijuana's collection and diversion system requires the rehabilitation of its pumping plants and intake expansion in order to operate per its intended purpose. The environment, public health, and economy of the affected areas depend on its reliability and will continue to face negative impacts under the diversion system's current deteriorating status.

In preparing the EA, EPA examined two alternatives, the no-action alternative and the proposed alternative. Under the No-Action alternative, no construction activities will take place. The proposed alternative will rehabilitate lift stations PBCILA, PB1A, and PB1B, and involve the construction of a new Tijuana River intake of approximately 289 feet (88 meters) with a 48-in fiberglass reinforced pipe, otherwise known as the Tijuana River Diversion System. These actions include improvements that were identified by CESPT and the North American Development Bank to mitigate transboundary flows created by untreated wastewater discharged into the Tijuana River. The proposed alternative was selected based upon engineering feasibility, compliance with regulatory requirements, preliminary cost estimates, and environmental considerations.

### **Environmental Consequences**

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

### **Public Review**

The EA and FONSI are posted and available for public review on the North American Development Bank's website at <http://www.nadb.org> or by contacting Gabriela Baeza-Castaneda at [baeza-castaneda.gabriela@epa.gov](mailto:baeza-castaneda.gabriela@epa.gov) or via phone at 415-972-3038. Comments on the EA and FONSI may be submitted to the EPA until the close of business October 1, 2021, and can be sent via email to Gabriela Baeza-Castaneda at [baeza-castaneda.gabriela@epa.gov](mailto:baeza-castaneda.gabriela@epa.gov).

EPA Region 9 will not take administrative action on the proposed project prior to the close of the comment period. If, after considering public comments, EPA Region 9 concludes the proposed project will not have significant environmental impacts, EPA Region 9 will revise this FONSI by adding a summary of the comments received and EPA Region 9's responses. The revised FONSI will be forwarded to the Water Division Director for review and signature. The FONSI will be final upon signature. EPA Region 9 will not recirculate the signed FONSI for public review but will make it available to any individual upon request.

### **Finding**

Based on the information contained in the EA, and after 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.