



REGION 9

SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94105

PRELIMINARY FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Drinking Water and Wastewater Collection Infrastructure
West Expansion Project for the City of Douglas, Arizona

December 31, 2025

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) invites the public to comment on its preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) based on the Environmental Assessment (EA) of a Drinking Water and Wastewater Collection Infrastructure West Expansion Project for the City of Douglas. EPA Region 9 intends to authorize Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) for this proposed project. EPA Region 9's authorization of 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 EA describing the potential environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

Project Location and Description

The proposed project is located in and west of the City of Douglas in Cochise County, Arizona, including along State Route 80 from U.S. Highway 191 to the Cochise College Douglas Campus, with an additional wastewater segment extending south toward West Puzzi Rancho Road.

Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

The proposed project will install new drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to extend utility service to areas west of the City of Douglas, replacing individual on-site septic systems and private wells. The expansion of the water and wastewater infrastructure will meet the current and projected utility service needs and promote the health and well-being of the residents in the expanded area. The new drinking water infrastructure would provide property owners with safe, reliable, and convenient access to clean drinking water. The wastewater expansion area would transition septic systems to centralized wastewater infrastructure providing improving reliability for higher system loads and enhancing environmental protection.

Alternatives Considered

EPA examined two alternatives for the EA, the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative.

1. No Action Alternative: Under the No Action Alternative, there are no construction activities.
2. Proposed Action (Preferred Alternative): The Preferred Alternative includes the installation of new drinking water and wastewater infrastructure to areas west of the City of Douglas. The drinking water system expansion includes construction of a new water campus consisting of a groundwater well, west high-pressure zone water storage tank, and associated components,

along with well improvements, a new raw water line, and new water distribution lines connecting to Cochise College and surrounding areas. The wastewater collection expansion would connect to the existing sewer main and includes wastewater collection line installation of over 43,200 feet.

Environmental Review

Based on the environmental impacts analysis in the EA, EPA determined that no significant environmental impacts are anticipated from the issuance of the grant and the proposed action does not constitute a major Federal action significantly affecting the quality of the human environment, making the preparation of an environmental impact statement unnecessary. Therefore, EPA Region 9 is issuing this preliminary FONSI to document this determination. The mitigation measures identified in Table 1 include environmental protection measures and best management practices (BMPs) that will be implemented for the Proposed Action to avoid or minimize adverse impacts. With these measures, impacts are expected to not be significant.

Table 1 Summary of Environmental Protection Measures and Best Management Practices

Environmental Resource	Environmental Protection Measures/Best Management Practices
Air Quality and Odor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimize idling conditions for construction equipment and vehicles. • Minimize the amount of new exposed soil/surface disturbance. • Apply water and/or dust suppressants periodically to exposed disturbed surface areas. • Reduce vehicle and equipment speeds on unpaved surfaces. • Cover or apply water to all open storage piles. • Regular maintenance and piping inspections would be conducted to help prevent septic conditions and reduce sulfide generation.
Water Resources including Groundwater	Obtain Approval for New Groundwater Well through Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR). The new proposed water well would require review and approval by the ADWR in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes Title 45, Chapter 2, Article 10, and the rules adopted thereafter.
Wetlands and Waters of the US	Avoid waters and wetlands. No work is allowed within waters (this includes dry washes and/or drainages with water present) or riparian vegetation unless deemed necessary and required permits are obtained.
Floodplains	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For the crossing of Whitewater Draw, additional study would occur as detailed design is developed to determine the approach to crossing the regulatory floodplain in this area. If avoidance is not feasible, additional measures will be taken to comply with Executive Order 11988 Floodplain Management. • The regulatory floodplain would be identified on construction document and the contractor instructed to avoid construction in the floodplain.
Soils and Geology	Stormwater and erosion control BMPs would be implemented during construction and local county and city requirements adhered to, including soil stabilization and seeding to reduce the likelihood of erosion.
Noise	Construction would adhere to Chapter 8.28 – Noise of the City of Douglas Municipal Code.
Traffic	The contractor would be required to prepare and implement a Traffic Management Plan during construction based on ADOT (SR 80) and County DOT (Kings Highway) policies and procedures to manage traffic and implement traffic safety measures.
Hazardous Material Sites	The City would consult with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality regarding the ongoing Voluntary Remediation Program at the former smelter site at Whitewater Draw to determine any potential risk associated with implementing the Project and limits of the site.

Environmental Resource	Environmental Protection Measures/Best Management Practices
Cultural and Historic Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On November 21, 2025, EPA received concurrence from the Arizona State Historic Preservation Office on the determination of no adverse effect on historic properties, as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). Construction contracts related to the proposed project will include provisions for protection of cultural resources if identified. Standards of practice as they are defined in Section 106 of the NHPA of 1966, as amended, will be maintained during all construction and ground disturbing activities, and if previously unidentified cultural or historical resources are discovered during construction, work at that location will stop immediately, all reasonable steps to secure the preservation of those features will be taken, and the State Historic Preservation Office, the North American Development Bank (which will oversee construction), and EPA must be notified. Pursuant to Arizona Revised Statutes §41-865, et seq., if any human remains or funerary objects are encountered at any time during the construction efforts, the contractor is to cease all work and notify the Arizona State Museum.
Biological Resources	<p>Noxious and Invasive Plant Species Treatment and Control</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Roadside Development Section would provide special provisions for the control of noxious and invasive plant species during construction that may require treatment and control within the Project limits. The contractor shall develop a Noxious and Invasive Plant Species Treatment and Control Plan in accordance with the requirements in the contract documents. Plants to be controlled shall include those listed in the State and Federal noxious weed and the State invasive species lists in accordance with State and Federal laws and executive orders. The plan and associated treatments shall include all areas within the Project right-of-way and easements as shown on the Project plans. The treatment and control plan shall be submitted to the Engineer for the ADOT Construction Professional Landscape Architect for review and approval prior to implementation by the contractor. Prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities and throughout the duration of construction and any landscape establishment period, the contractor shall arrange for and perform the control of noxious and invasive species in the Project area. To prevent the introduction of invasive species seeds, all earthmoving and hauling equipment shall be washed prior to entering the construction site, and the contractor shall inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached debris, including plant parts, soil, and mud, prior to the equipment entering the construction site. To prevent invasive species seeds from leaving the site, the contractor shall inspect all construction and hauling equipment and remove all debris, including plant parts, soil, and mud, prior to leaving the construction site. <p>Arizona Native Plant Law Compliance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The ADOT Roadside Development Section would determine if Arizona Department of Agriculture notification is needed for the protected native plants impacted by the project. If notification is needed, the ADOT Roadside Development Section would send the notification at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of construction. <p>Nesting Bird Protections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist in suitable habitat (such as ephemeral washes and existing bridges) at least 10 days prior to initiating work during the nesting bird season (March 1 to August 31). If any active bird nests identified within the Project limits, construction activities will avoid disturbing the nest. Avoidance areas, if necessary, will be marked in the field until the nestlings have fledged and the nest is no longer active. No work will occur within 300 feet of the ephemeral drainage at Whitewater Draw during nesting bird season (March 1 to August 31). The contractor shall remove all trees and shrubs during the nonbreeding season (September 1 to February 28) to avoid impacts to nesting birds known to occur in the area.

Public Review and Comment Period

EPA Region 9 is providing a 30-day public comment period on the preliminary FONSI and draft EA, as required by 40 CFR Part 6.203. These documents (EPA No. N2025470) are available for review from EPA's NEPA Compliance Database at: cdxapps.epa.gov/cdx-enepa-II/public/action/nepa/search. Interested parties may submit comments regarding this preliminary decision by the close of business on January 30, 2026.

Please submit comments to:

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EPA will not take administrative action on the proposed project during the 30-day comment period. EPA will make a final decision after reviewing comments. The preliminary finding will become final after the 30-day comment period expires if no new significant information is provided to alter this finding.