

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Agua Prieta Wastewater
Collection System Expansion Projects

PROJECTS LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the City of Agua Prieta, for construction of wastewater collection lines to serve existing residents in the southeastern sector of the community that lack adequate wastewater treatment and disposal. A project to provide collection service to residents in the southwestern, and southernmost sectors of Agua Prieta has also been proposed and will be considered in this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI). Agua Prieta, a municipality comprised of more than 75,000 people, is located in the northeastern part of the State of Sonora, Mexico, on the U.S./Mexico border, adjacent to the town of Douglas, Arizona.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTIONS

The purpose of the proposed actions is to address the environmental and public health risks associated with inadequate collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater. The proposed actions will protect public health by providing appropriate wastewater collection to approximately 20,000 residents that rely on cesspools or open ditches for wastewater disposal. The proposed actions consist of extending the wastewater collection system network to parts of southern Agua Prieta that currently lack access to these services. The projects consist of installing about 170,000 linear meters of wastewater collection (sewer) lines ranging from 8 to 14 inches (20 to 38 centimeters) in diameter, plus six inch connections. Raw wastewater generated by these sectors is estimated at about six hundred and fifty thousand gallons per day (29 liters per second). All wastewater collected by the new sewer lines will be treated at the existing Agua Prieta wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). This WWTP provides secondary treatment prior to discharge to the Rio Agua Prieta. The proposed action will significantly reduce or eliminate the use of inadequate wastewater disposal practices by providing collection service and conveying flows to an existing wastewater treatment plant, resulting in improved environmental and sanitation conditions.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND CONDITIONS

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA has prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential transboundary 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 wastewater collection system improvements. The Secretairia de Medio Ambiente y Recursos Naturales (SEMARNAT) has determined that the proposed action is exempt from Mexico's substantive environmental review process. However, the EA also documents the environmental consequences of this action in Mexico and supports a determination that the proposed infrastructure project will not have a significant adverse impact on human health and the environment in Mexico.

PUBLIC REVIEW

The EA is on file, along with other project materials, and is available for public inspection at the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco, California. This EA and FNSI can also be viewed on-line on the EPA website at <http://www.epa.gov/region9/border>. Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the office of the Douglas City Clerk, 425 10th Street, Douglas, AZ 85607, ph. 520-364-1586. Interested persons, including those who disagree with this proposal, may submit comments to EPA Region 9 within 30 calendar days from the day this document is issued. No administrative action will be taken on this proposed project prior to the expiration date of this comment period. Comments, via letter, fax or email, should be sent to Thomas Konner at the address listed below:

Thomas Konner (WTR-4)
U.S. EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105
Telephone (415) 972-3408
Fax (415) 947-3537
Email konner.thomas@epa.gov

After EPA assesses any comments received, those comments, EPA responses, and this FNSI will be forwarded to the Regional Administrator for review and signature. If this FNSI is signed by the Regional Administrator, it will not be re-circulated for review but will be available to any individual upon request.

FINDING

After review of the EA and any comments received, EPA has determined that the proposed wastewater collection improvement projects for Agua Prieta will not have a significant impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this project.

Wayne Nastri
Regional Administrator

Date