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

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

Wastewater Collection and Treatment
For the City of Douglas, Arizona, United States
February 2014

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 intends to award a Border Environmental Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the City of Douglas, Arizona for the construction of a new wastewater collection system in the Bay Acres Colonia, and an upgrade of the Douglas Wastewater Treatment Plant.

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

The City of Douglas is located in the southeastern corner of Arizona in Cochise County. Douglas is on the US-Mexico international border, adjacent to the City of Agua Prieta, Mexico, and is approximately 118 miles southeast of Tucson, Arizona. The Bay Acres Colonia is located on the northeastern edge of Douglas, outside of the City limits and south of Highway 80.

The project consists of the construction of a new wastewater collection system in the Bay Acres Colonia, and an upgrade of the Douglas Wastewater Treatment Plant. The upgrade will increase wastewater treatment capacity from 2.0 million gallons per day (MGD) to 3.1 MGD to enable the plant to accept and treat wastewater from current wastewater flows and new flows from the Bay Acres Colonia, and in order to meet ADEQ capacity requirements.

Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

The Bay Acres Colonia is currently serviced by inadequate, failing onsite wastewater treatment systems (septic tanks with leach fields). These onsite treatment systems are problematic in Bay Acres because the residential lots are small and the systems are either failing or near the end of their useful life. As a result, the small lots do not provide an adequate area for a new replacement leach field. The failing on-site wastewater systems are a public health concern due to various pathogenic microorganisms, ammonia and nitrate that may produce a health risk to humans and degrade the environment. The expansion of the wastewater collection system to the Bay Acres Colonia, and expansion and upgrade of the Douglas Wastewater Treatment Plant are intended to provide improved health, sanitation, and security to the residents of the Bay Acres Colonia and the City of Douglas.

This project will increase the capacity of the wastewater treatment plant from 2.0 MGD to 3.1 MGD under Aquifer Protection Permit (#P-100832) in order to accept and treat flows from the expanded wastewater collection system and modest growth in the City of Douglas. The project will provide capacity to meet needs of the Bay Acres Colonia and other existing homes in the area adjacent to the

colonia that may connect to the system, as well as allow for limited and controlled build out of the City and its associated colonias. Additionally, the project will help meet minimum Class B+ effluent standards to enable the reuse of the effluent on open access landscape areas in the project, and to meet the requirements for the Douglas Aquifer Protection Permit.

In preparing the EA, EPA examined several alternatives for both the upgrade to the Douglas WWTP and the expansion of the wastewater collection system to the Bay Acres Colonia. A no-action alternative was considered in addition to several action alternatives. The proposed alternative will provide service to the Bay Acres Colonia and immediate surrounding areas, as well the construction of two oxidation ditches, a secondary clarifier, lift station, aerobic digester, and an operations and maintenance building. 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

EPA Region 9 made the EA and unsigned FONSI available for public review through February 27, 2014 on the internet at http://www.epa.gov/region9/nepa/epa-generated/ and at the offices of EPA Region 9 (75 Hawthorne Street, San Francisco, CA 94015-3901). Notice of the public comment period was published in the *Douglas Dispatch* on January 29, 2014.

EPA did not receive any comments on the EA and unsigned FONSI prior to the close of the public comment period on February 27, 2014.

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.

Jane Diamond
Director, Water Division

2-28-2014
Date