

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

### **Expansion of Drinking Water Distribution and Wastewater Collection Services to Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio and Surrounding Areas Nogales, Sonora, Mexico**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA) is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the Water and Wastewater Utility of Nogales, Sonora (Organismo Operador Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado y Saneamiento [OOMAPAS]) to expand their drinking water distribution and wastewater collection systems to unserved areas within and around Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio (Donaldo Colosio).

U.S. EPA Region 9's consideration of funding 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 U.S. EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, U.S. EPA Region 9 has prepared a supplemental environmental assessment (SEA) describing the potential environmental impacts associated with, and the alternatives to, the proposed project. This SEA expands the project scope identified in the June 2009 Environmental Assessment for Drinking Water Distribution Expansion to Un-served Areas Colonia Luis Donaldo Colosio, Nogales, Sonora, Mexico (Colosio Drinking Water EA). Additionally, this SEA incorporates by reference the SEA for the May 2009 Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant and Conveyance System Construction Nogales, Sonora, Mexico (Los Alisos Wastewater SEA), which evaluated the potential environmental impacts associated with expansion of the wastewater collection system to Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas.

This finding of no significant impact (FONSI) documents the U.S. EPA Region 9's determination that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

#### **Project Location and Description**

The proposed project is located in the Municipality of Nogales, in the north central area of the Mexican state of Sonora. Nogales abuts the international border and shares its northern boundary with Nogales, Arizona. The proposed project lies within Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas, approximately 2-5 miles south of the border.

## **Purpose and Need for Proposed Project**

The purpose and scope of this SEA are twofold. The first is to supplement the Colosio Drinking Water EA, which evaluated the potential environmental consequences of providing drinking water services to approximately 800 unserved residences in Donaldo Colosio. This SEA will address an expanded project scope that will include constructing drinking water infrastructure to parts of five additional colonias (Flores Magnon, Las Torres, Las Primavera, Jardines de la Montaña, and Restro) and therefore bring centralized water distribution services to an additional 1,600 homes that were not considered in the original Colosio Drinking Water EA. Currently, these homes rely on hauled water deliveries for drinking water. The Colosio Drinking Water EA is included as an appendix to this SEA.

The second purpose of this SEA is to incorporate by reference the prior environmental evaluation of expanding wastewater collection and treatment to residences in and around Donaldo Colosio. The impacts of new wastewater service to the proposed project area were evaluated in 2009 as part of the Los Alisos Wastewater SEA.

## **Environmental Consequences**

Currently, the Nogales water distribution system reaches an estimated 60% of the population of Donaldo Colosio and surrounding areas. The remaining population relies on drinking water hauled by truck, a practice that is subject to significant risk of contamination in the delivery and storage of drinking water. In most cases, the delivered supply is not adequate to support the population's drinking water needs. In addition, a portion of the residents in Donaldo Colosio and surrounding area also lack adequate wastewater collection and treatment. Inadequately collected and treated wastewater jeopardizes the health of these residents by the potential exposure to pollutants. In addition, the discharge of untreated wastewater contributes to groundwater and surface water contamination both in Mexico and in areas around the Nogales Wash and Santa Cruz River in Arizona. An estimated 50% of the wastewater generated in Donaldo Colosio is collected and sent to the Los Alisos Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) for treatment and disposal to the Rio Los Alisos. The remaining wastewater is either disposed of in cesspools before entering the environment or is discharged directly to the environment as raw sewage.

The proposed project will provide drinking water services to approximately 2,400 residences in Donaldo Colosio and the surrounding area. Project design includes installation of a water distribution system network of 29,679 linear meters of 2 to 20-inch pipe.

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

## **Public Review**

The SEA is on file and available for public review at the U.S. EPA Region 9 office. Interested parties may submit comments on the EA and this unsigned FONSI to U.S. EPA Region 9 by 5:00 p.m. on September 2, 2013. Comments via letter, fax, or email should be sent to Elizabeth Borowiec, Project Officer, at the following address:

EPA Region 9  
*WTR-4*  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94015-3901  
telephone: 415-972-3419  
fax: 415-947-3537  
email: [borowiec.elizabeth@epa.gov](mailto:borowiec.elizabeth@epa.gov)

U.S. 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, U.S. EPA Region 9 concludes the proposed project will not have significant environmental impacts, U.S. EPA Region 9 will revise this FONSI by adding a summary of the comments received and U.S. 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. U.S. EPA Region 9 will not recirculate the signed FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request.