

## Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements, San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora

EPA is considering the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to the Organismo Operador Municipal de Agua Potable Alcantarillado y Sanamiento (OOMAPAS) for a proposed project that includes the rehabilitation and construction of wastewater infrastructure facilities in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico. Specifically, the improvements include:

Construction of a 9.13 million gallon per day wastewater treatment plant  
Rehabilitation and expansion of the municipal wastewater collection system

EPA's involvement in this project is part of a national commitment to improve environmental conditions along the U.S.-Mexico border. EPA participates in the development and implementation of water supply and wastewater infrastructure projects in coordination with the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) and the North American Development Bank (NADBank). BECC is responsible for certifying projects so that they comply with sound technical, environmental, financial and public participation principles. NADBank administers the BEIF grants for projects that have been certified by BECC and approved by EPA. For more information about BECC, please go to: <http://www.cocef.org/english/becc.html> and for NADBank: [http://www.nadbank.org/english/Introduction\\_frame\\_set.htm](http://www.nadbank.org/english/Introduction_frame_set.htm).

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), EPA has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) that analyzes the potential transboundary environmental impacts the proposed project may have in the United States. Based on a review of the EA, EPA determined that the project will not have significant environmental impacts and has circulated a Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) for public comment. To view the EA and FNSI, please click on the links below. During the thirty (30) day public comment period, which ends June 16, 2000, interested reviewers, including those who disagree with the proposed project and/or with this FNSI, may submit comments to EPA at the address listed below.

Please direct questions or comments to:

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San Francisco, CA 94105  
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**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements  
for  
San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora, Mexico

**PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is considering authorizing the award of a Border Environment Infrastructure Fund (BEIF) grant to Organismo Operador Municipal de Agua Potable y Alcantarillado (OOMAPAS) for construction of a wastewater treatment plant, and, the rehabilitation and expansion of the wastewater collection system in San Luis Rio Colorado. San Luis Rio Colorado is located south of the U.S.-Mexico border from San Luis, Arizona.

The proposed project involves the construction of a 9.13 million gallon per day (mgd) wastewater treatment plant for the residents of San Luis Rio Colorado. The plant will be constructed in three phases starting with 9.13 mgd treatment capacity which will eventually be expanded to 18.3 mgd by the year 2012. The proposed project and grant funding pertain only to phase one of the wastewater treatment plant and the improvements to the wastewater collection lines.

**PURPOSE AND NEED**

The purpose of the project is to provide the City of San Luis Rio Colorado wastewater treatment capability and increase the coverage of the sewer system to the entire community. Currently, the city does not treat its wastewater and the sewer system provides service to only 37 percent of the population. Residents who do not have access to the sewer system discharge to on-site reservoirs such as cesspools and septic tanks.

The City has four main sewage collection lines which discharge raw sewage to land disposal or to the Colorado River via a concrete pipe and a 2-mile long earthen canal. A portion of the canal is unlined as are the cesspools and untreated wastewater has infiltrated into the groundwater. Several agricultural groundwater wells east of the Colorado River, approximately two to three miles (3.2 km to 4.8 km) south of the U.S.-Mexico international border are contaminated. These wells are used to irrigate agricultural crops adjacent to the Colorado River. In addition, leaks in the water and wastewater pipes allow for potential contamination of the water supply.

The infrastructure improvements being proposed will improve sewer and sanitation services in San Luis Rio Colorado. They will also decrease potential human health hazards associated with contamination of the groundwater aquifers and agricultural products. Colorado River water quality would be improved with the elimination of the discharge of untreated wastewater and resultant zone of degradation that affects aquatic communities.

**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND CONDITIONS**

The proposed project will be constructed in San Luis Rio Colorado, Sonora and may have potential environmental impacts in San Luis, Arizona. 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 infrastructure improvements. 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 this project.

Environmental impacts in Mexico are addressed in the Manifestación de Impacto Ambiental Modalidad General, which was prepared in accordance with the environmental impact review process of the Secretaría de Infraestructura Urbana y Ecología del Estado de Sonora. This analysis supports a determination that the 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. Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the following location:

Public Library, San Luis Branch  
731 North First Street  
San Luis, Arizona  
Telephone: (520) 627-8344

In addition, the EA will be posted on the Border Environment Cooperation Commission (BECC) website at <http://www.cocef.org/aproyectos/ing5.htm> . If you would like to obtain additional information about the project, please contact Evelyn Wachtel by email at: [wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov](mailto:wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov) or by calling (415) 744-1167.

Interested persons, including those who disagree with this proposal, may submit comments to EPA Region 9 within 30 calendar days from the date this document is issued. No administrative action will be taken on this proposed project prior to the expiration of this comment period. Comments, via letter, fax or email, should be sent to Evelyn Wachtel at the address listed below.

Evelyn Wachtel (WTR-4)  
U.S. EPA Region 9  
75 Hawthorne Street  
San Francisco, CA 94105  
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Email: [wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov](mailto:wachtel.evelyn@epa.gov)

After EPA assesses any comments received, those comments, EPA's 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 recirculated 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 project will not have a significant impact on the environment and that an Environmental Impact Statement will not be prepared for this project.

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Felicia Marcus  
Regional Administrator

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Date