

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FNSI)
Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements
for
Tecate, Baja California, 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 Comisión Estatal de Servicios Públicos de Tecate (CESPTe) for improvements to the water distribution and wastewater collection and treatment systems in Tecate, Baja California.

The proposed project involves improvements to the water system including replacement, relocation, and installation of water meters; rehabilitation of distribution lines in poor condition; construction of water distribution systems in areas without service; improvements to the chlorination facilities; and construction of storage facilities. It also includes improvements to the wastewater system consisting of installation of approximately 107,000 feet of new wastewater collection lines and 424 manholes. The project also entails improvements to the Tecate Wastewater Treatment Plant and acquisition of operation and maintenance machinery and equipment.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The purpose of this project is to improve the City of Tecate, Baja California water and wastewater system. Approximately, 92 percent of the population of Tecate is connected to the water supply system. The remaining 8 percent relies on municipal or private delivery truck and on-site storage.

The City of Tecate's wastewater collection and treatment system services 84 percent of the City's population of 67,006 inhabitants. Residents without sewer service dispose of their wastewater through latrines, septic systems, and open ditches. Given the relatively hilly landscape of Tecate, any uncontrolled raw sewage can flow to the Tecate Creek.

The infrastructure improvements being proposed will improve potable water, sewer and sanitation services to Tecate, Baja California. They will also decrease potential human health hazards associated with contamination of the groundwater and surface water. Tecate Creek water quality would be improved with the elimination of the discharge of untreated wastewater.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES AND MITIGATION

The proposed project will be constructed in the City of Tecate, Baja California and may have potential environmental impacts in southeastern San Diego County. 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 EPA did not identify any significant impacts after mitigation to the environment that would result from the implementation of this project.

Environmental impacts in Mexico are addressed in the *Manifestación de Impacto Ambiental* (MIA) was prepared to comply with Mexican environmental review regulations. The MIA was submitted to the State Dirección General de Ecología for review and approval in October 1999. The MIA was approved by such agency on November 26, 1999. The MIA supports the determination that the project will not have significant adverse impacts 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 Diego, California. Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the following location:

Tecate Chamber of Commerce
Mr. George Woodhead
446 Industrial Street
Tecate, California 91980
(619) 478-9494

The EA will be posted on the BECC website at: <http://www.cocef.org/aproyectos/ing5.htm>.

If you have difficulty accessing the information on the website or would like to obtain additional information about the project, please contact Elizabeth Borowiec at borowiec.elizabeth@epa.gov or by calling (415) 744-1163.

Interested persons 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 Elizabeth Borowiec at the address listed below:

Elizabeth Borowiec (WTR-4)
U.S. EPA Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, California 94105
Telephone: (415) 744-1167
Fax: (415) 744-1163
Email: borowiec.elizabeth@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 the Regional Administrator signs this FNSI, 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 the project.

Felicia Marcus
Regional Administrator

Date