



REGION 6

DALLAS, TX 75270

January 13, 2025

Categorical Exclusion

for the Rio Grande City Wastewater Collection and Treatment Project

Project Number: 73874

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 6 intends to provide grant funds to the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) the Rio Grande City Wastewater Collection and Treatment Project (Project) located in Rio Grande City, Starr County, Texas.

EPA's approval of grant funding for the proposed Project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §4321 – 4370(f). A federal agency may categorically exclude certain actions from detailed environmental review that do not individually, or cumulatively, have a significant effect on the quality of the environment. To qualify for a categorical exclusion, a project must conform to one of the categories listed in 40 CFR §6.204(a) and it must not involve any of the extraordinary circumstances identified in 40 CFR §6.102(b).

Project Description

Rio Grande City, Texas, located in Starr County is proposing to use \$7,495,615 in financing from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Program to expand the capacity of their wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) from 1.5 million gallons per day (MGD) to 1.94 MGD and correct deficiencies at the WWTP. The proposed Project area for the sewer collection and conveyance system is approximately at the intersection of US Highway 83 with Suntex Road in Starr County, Texas.

The proposed action is to correct deficiencies and expand the existing plant from 1.5 MGD to 2.0 MGD. There will be four primary construction activities related to the implementation of the Project. They are 1) the construction, repair, and upgrade of liquid treatment processing units,

2) the construction, repair, and upgrade of sludge processing units, 3) sitework to improve the plant functionality, and 4) demolition and removal of abandoned facilities. The Project will provide for first time sewer service to 394 connections within six colonias and along Alvarez Road. To service the 394 connections, the Project includes construction of a sewer collection system and the expansion of the existing Rio Grande City WWTP from its current permitted capacity.

Eligibility for Categorical Exclusion

In accordance with the EPA's regulations for implementing the NEPA, 42 USC §4321-4370f, EPA Region 6 has determined this Project to be eligible for a categorical exclusion under 40 CFR §6.204(a)(1)(ii), which allows projects to be categorically excluded when the projects involve: "actions relating to existing infrastructure systems (such as sewer systems; drinking water supply systems; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) that involve minor upgrading, or minor expansion of system capacity or rehabilitation (including functional replacement) of the existing system and system components (such as the sewer collection network and treatment system; the system to collect, treat, store and distribute drinking water; and stormwater systems, including combined sewer overflow systems) or construction of new minor ancillary facilities adjacent to or on the same property as existing facilities."

The proposed Project qualifies for the categorical exclusion set forth under 40 CFR §6.204(a)(1)(ii) as it involves minor upgrading or expansion of existing infrastructure systems and system components. In addition, the Project does not involve new or relocated discharges to surface or ground water; will not result in the substantial increase in the volume or the loading of pollutants to the receiving water; will not provide capacity to serve a population of 30% greater than the existing population; and will not directly or indirectly involve upgrading or extending infrastructure systems for the purpose of future development.

The proposed action in Rio Grande City, Texas is directly related to providing a wastewater collection system to the residents of the Project area whose social and economic environment will be improved and improving water quality. Additionally, the proposed action is not located within the 100-year flood plain; therefore, coordination with the local flood plain administrator is not required.

The proposed action is not expected to impact threatened or endangered species or habitat.

Extraordinary Circumstances (40 CFR §6.204(b)(1) through (b)(10))

EPA has reviewed the proposed Project and determined that it does not involve any extraordinary circumstances listed in 40 CFR §6.204(b)(1) through (b)(10). The proposed construction activity improvements will take place at the existing facility and no new land disturbance would be required.

Finding

EPA finds the proposed action conforms to the category of actions eligible for exclusion from detailed environmental review under CFR 40 CFR §6.204(a)(1)(ii) and will not involve any extraordinary circumstances. Accordingly, EPA will not prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed action. EPA may revoke this categorical exclusion if changes in the proposed action render it ineligible for exclusion or if new evidence emerges which indicates that serious local or environmental issues exist or federal, state, or local laws would be violated.

Sincerely,

Robert Houston
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and Environmental Review Division