



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200  
DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

May 26, 2011

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION**

**TO ALL INTERESTED GOVERNMENT AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:**

In accordance with the environmental review regulations of the Council on Environmental Quality at 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1500, and the implementing environmental review procedures at 40 CFR Part 6 entitled "Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the Council on Environmental Quality on the National Environmental Policy Act", the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has determined that the following action is eligible for a Categorical Exclusion (CE) and is exempt from further environmental review.

Drinking Water System Improvements Project  
Proposed by the City of La Vernia  
Located in Wilson County, Texas

Estimated EPA Share: \$485,000  
Estimated Local Share: \$396,818

**BACKGROUND**

The City of La Vernia (City) is located in the south central portion of Texas approximately 30 miles east of San Antonio. According to the 2000 U.S. Census, La Vernia had a population of 931 residents. The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the operational and functional inadequacies of its drinking water system.

The proposed project includes the installation of a new water well, upgrading the transfer pump at the existing elevated storage tank, and replacing four existing supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems. The stated objectives of the proposed project are to improve the City's water quality and quantity, correct inadequate water system components, to establish self-sufficiency, and to better manage water system related expenses.

The City's existing well currently produces 250 gallons per minute (gpm). The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) requires 332 gpm of well capacity. The City's existing well produces water that contains 3,000 parts per million (ppm) total dissolved solids (TDS). The TCEQ recommends additional treatment for

TDS in excess of 500 ppm. In addition, there are instances where water pressures are not maintained at TCEQ required levels. In order to make up the difference in water quality and quantity, the City purchases water from an out-of-region water supplier, the Canyon Regional Water Authority (CRWA). Purchasing water from the CRWA has created a financial burden for the City.

The Fiscal Year 2010 Special Appropriations for the EPA included special Congressional funding for water and wastewater construction projects. The funding recipient was selected to receive funding support through these special appropriations for improvements to their drinking water system. These improvements should alleviate the financial burden created by purchasing additional water and should enable the City to continue to protect the health and welfare of its citizens by improving the functional and operational capability of the drinking water system.

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the proposed project was reviewed for environmental impacts by the City. The review process determined that no significant adverse environmental impacts should result from implementation of the proposed project, and that the project qualifies for the issuance of a CE. The results of the review process are acceptable to the EPA, and provide adequate and reasonable assurance that no significant adverse environmental impacts should result from the proposed project. The funding recipient has requested that the proposed project be granted a CE by the EPA, and be excluded from the full environmental review and assessment requirements of NEPA.

### **PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The City is proposing the following improvements to correct the functional and operational inadequacies associated with the drinking water system:

1. Install a new water well at existing water well #5 site
2. Make improvements to the transfer pump at the existing elevated storage tank site
3. Replace the supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) system components at four existing water system sites

All project-related installation and improvement activities will occur entirely on City owned property. No new land will be acquired, and no persons or businesses will be displaced by the proposed project. After completion, the new water well, improved transfer pump, and SCADA component replacements should insure the City's drinking water system meets all TCEQ requirements and alleviates the need to purchase water from the CRWA. The proposed project will not expand the capacity of the existing system, which would then not qualify for exclusion from full NEPA review.

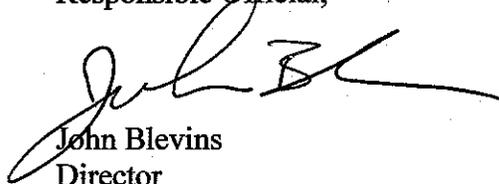
**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

The proposed project qualifies for a CE. The proposed project is a small-scale, routine action solely directed toward minor rehabilitation of existing equipment and installation of new equipment. The proposed action will not individually, cumulatively over time, or in conjunction with any other federal, state, local, or private actions, have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment and may be exempted from environmental review under NEPA. No adverse direct, indirect, or cumulative effects on air quality, cultural resources, threatened and endangered species and their critical habitat, floodplains, rare or unique vegetation, wetlands, waterways, prime farmlands, or aquifer recharge zones were identified. There are no Environmental Justice concerns with the proposed project because all residents in the area will benefit equally from the improvements. The City has and will continue to involve the public in the proposed project by committing to make all documents and plans available at public facilities, at City Council meetings, and in the local newspaper.

**APPROVAL**

The request for the issuance of a CE is approved. This approval will be revoked if at any time the proposed project no longer meets the eligibility for a CE, new evidence determines that significant local or environmental issues exist, or that federal, state, local, or tribal laws are being or may be violated by implementation of the proposed project.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins  
Director  
Compliance Assurance and  
Enforcement Division

cc: Harold Schott, Mayor  
City of La Vernia