



**UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY**

REGION 6

1445 ROSS AVENUE, SUITE 1200

DALLAS, TX 75202-2733

December 22, 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 Lawton  
Located in Comanche County, Oklahoma

Estimated EPA Share: \$207,879

Estimated Local Share: \$2,292,120

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Lawton (City) is located in the southwestern portion of Oklahoma approximately 90 miles southwest of Oklahoma City and has an estimated population of 91,000 residents. The City has proposed to rehabilitate portions of its drinking water infrastructure in order to provide adequate levels of water delivery and increase operational efficiency.

The City is proposing to replace approximately 12,760 feet of an existing 10-inch waterline within the drinking water infrastructure system. The existing 10-inch waterline is located in the southern portion of the City. The existing waterline serves the low zone west from the new southeast water treatment plant (SEWTP). The new SEWTP has a 10 million gallons per day (mgd) capacity. Currently, the SEWTP treats approximately 6 mgd on a maximum day. The existing 10-inch line across East Cache Creek has been exposed due to scour and erosion problems and has had recurring maintenance issues. The line is also experiencing low pressure (below 30 psi) on a maximum day in pockets of the low zone areas. Replacing the existing 10-inch waterline with an 18-inch waterline will eliminate recurring maintenance issues and will allow for increased utilization of the SEWTP by treating approximately 7.5 mgd on a maximum day. As growth in some parts of the low zone has occurred and will likely continue to occur in the future, this added capacity resulting from the proposed 18-inch waterline will meet the increased demand. Although there is growth in the southern portion of the City, the projected population increase is well below 30 percent.

The Fiscal Year 2004 Appropriations Act 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 its water infrastructure system. These improvements should enable the City to continue to protect the health and welfare of the citizens living in the area by improving the operational capability of the water infrastructure system.

The project was initially reviewed for environmental impacts by the Oklahoma Water Resources Board (OWRB) in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The review by the OWRB 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 OWRB are acceptable to the EPA, and provide adequate and reasonable assurance that no significant adverse environmental impacts should result from the project. The funding recipient has requested that the 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 to replace an existing 10-inch drinking water line with an 18-inch line which should correct the operational inadequacies of the water infrastructure in the southern part of the City. The project vicinity is generally urban in nature.

The waterline will begin at the intersection of SW Washington Avenue and SW 4<sup>th</sup> Street. It will run east along SW Washington Avenue, then north along SW 2<sup>nd</sup> Street, then east along Lee Boulevard to SE Flower Mound. It will cross East Cache Creek and Numu Creek (formerly Squaw Creek). Construction methods will involve a combination of open trench-cut, bore with casing, and directional drilling. Embedment depth to the crown of the waterline will be generally 3 feet, 5 feet under street pavement, and about 15 feet underneath East Cache Creek and Numu Creek. Directional drilling will be utilized which will run the line underneath both creeks at a depth of approximately 15 feet. The existing 10-inch line will be abandoned in place. Thus, impacts to waters of the U.S. are not expected. A portion of the project site is located within the regulatory floodplain. The project will not impact the floodplain as construction of the waterline will be underground. Upon completion of waterline construction, all disturbed areas will be stabilized with vegetation.

All project-related rehabilitation and installation activities will occur within existing easements or previously disturbed land. No new land will be acquired, and no persons or businesses will be displaced by the project. After completion, the new waterline should insure increased operational functionality of the drinking water system. The project includes minor upgrading and minor expansion of system capacity of the existing system and system components, which meets the requirements of 40 CFR § 6.204 (a)(1).

**CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION**

The proposed project qualifies for a CE. The project is a small-scale, routine action solely directed toward replacement of existing equipment with 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 cultural resources, endangered and threatened species and their critical habitat, floodplains, wetlands, 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 water system improvements.

**APPROVAL**

The request for the issuance of a CE is approved. This approval will be revoked if at any time the 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 project.

Responsible Official,



John Blevins  
Director  
Compliance Assurance and  
Enforcement Division

cc: Fred L. Fitch, Mayor  
City of Lawton

J.D. Strong, Executive Director  
Oklahoma Water Resources Board