



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION 6

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

October 26, 2010

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 Infrastructure Rehabilitation Project
Proposed by the City of Andrews
Located in Andrews County, Texas

Estimated EPA Share: \$ 388,000
Estimated Local Share: \$ 317,455

BACKGROUND

The City of Andrews (City) is located in far west Texas approximately 35 miles northwest of the Midland/Odessa area, and has a population of about 10,500 residents. The City serves approximately 4,500 drinking water customers consisting of 4,000 residential, 350 business/commercial and 150 governmental/other entities. The City is currently experiencing high levels of arsenic and fluoride in its municipal drinking water supply. The contaminant levels are naturally occurring, and are above EPA's maximum permitted standards. The situation allows the possibility of constant environmental contamination, and has resulted in a public health hazard for the citizens living in the area. The City has entered into a Compliance Agreement with the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) to address this problem to protect the health and welfare of the citizens living in the area.

The City has proposed the phased-in installation of Reverse Osmosis units at each drinking water faucet/sink to remove the contaminants from the drinking water. The City will own, operate and maintain these individual treatment units by adopting and enforcing an appropriate city ordinance. The City has chosen this approach of individual treatment units in homes, businesses and government buildings rather than centralized treatment as a way to reduce operating costs and to save additional water. A centralized treatment system would require an expansion of the City's water supply since only about 2% of the City's water is used

for drinking. The remaining 98% is used for other purposes such as bathing, lawn watering, and other household purposes. If successful, this method of point-of-use treatment may serve as a model for meeting Safe Drinking Water Act standards in a cost-effective manner for small communities throughout the country.

The Fiscal Year 2010 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 the installation and operation of the individual filtration units at the consumer level. The funding recipient will utilize the special Congressional funding support in conjunction with local funds to finance the implementation of the proposed project.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City hosted a Point-of-Use Pilot Demonstration Project in 2009 in cooperation with the TCEQ, the University of Texas, and a consulting engineering firm. The purpose of the project was to conduct a pilot-scale test of different commercially available Point-of-Use units. The units tested included Activated Alumina, Ferrous Oxide and Reverse Osmosis. The results of the demonstration indicated that the most effective treatment technology for arsenic and fluoride removal is the Reverse Osmosis method. The report provides meaningful insight into specific areas of interest or concern, and demonstrates a reasonable basis for accurately and effectively determining the removal efficiency of both contaminants from the public drinking water in the City. Therefore, the City has chosen to proceed with the installation of the Reverse Osmosis filtration units at individual faucets/sinks throughout the City. The City will use a phased-in approach to retrofit the units, and will eventually install all filtration units as the project progresses.

All project related rehabilitation and construction activities will occur entirely within the premises of existing structures. No new land will be acquired, and no persons or businesses will be displaced by the project. All citizens will be served equally, and will receive full benefits from the improvements. After completion, the rehabilitated facilities should insure adequate and safe removal of the contaminants from the water. The proposed project will not increase or expand the City's existing water supply capacity. Any such expansion would not qualify for exclusion from full NEPA review.

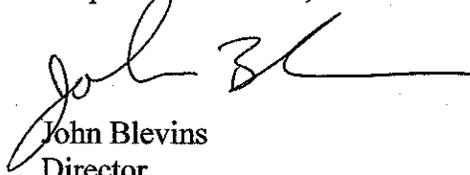
CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

The proposed project qualifies for a CE. The project is a small-scale, routine action solely directed toward minor rehabilitation of an existing facility and functional replacement of existing 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, floodplain, wetlands, prime farmlands or aquifer recharge zones were identified. There are no Environmental Justice concerns with the proposed project since all residents in the area will benefit equally from the infrastructure 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: Robert Zap, Mayor
City of Andrews

Kevin Ward, Executive Administrator
Texas Water Development Board