



— BUREAU OF —
RECLAMATION

Finding of No Significant Impact and Decision Record

Programmatic Environmental Assessment for the WIFIA Program

CGB-ED-2026-032

Interior Region 10 • California-Great Basin

Prepared and Recommended by: _____
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Mission Statements

The U.S. Department of the Interior protects and manages the Nation's natural resources and cultural heritage; provides scientific and other information about those resources; and honors its trust responsibilities or special commitments to American Indians, Alaska Natives, Native Hawaiians, and affiliated Island Communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

Introduction

In accordance with section 102(2) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) prepared a Programmatic Environmental Assessment (PEA) to evaluate the environmental impacts of water infrastructure projects receiving credit assistance through the Water Infrastructure Finance and Innovation Act (WIFIA) program located throughout the United States. This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) follows implementation regulations for republishing an environmental document where the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) was not a cooperating agency on the other agency's EA as described in 43 CFR Part 46 and the Department of the Interior Handbook of NEPA Implementation Procedures (516 DM 1). This FONSI is supported by EPA's PEA for the WIFIA Program, incorporated here by reference.

Purpose and Need

The purpose and need of the proposed action is to support the WIFIA program's mission to accelerate investment in our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance under customized terms to creditworthy water and wastewater projects of national and regional significance. WIFIA works separately from, but in some instances in coordination with, the State Revolving Fund (SRF Loan Programs to provide subsidized financing for large dollar-value projects).

The proposed action is needed to:

- Assist communities facing challenges in providing adequate and reliable water infrastructure services by financing capital improvements;
- Provide a financing mechanism that allows long-term debt to be spread out over the useful life of projects while retaining affordability of user rates; and
- Provide credit assistance benefits not readily available in capital markets.

Proposed Action

The proposed Federal action is the issuance of credit assistance for the design, construction, operation, and maintenance of eligible WIFIA projects.

The PEA for the WIFIA Program includes Appendix A: Environmental Questionnaire for WIFIA Credit Assistance Projects. This questionnaire will be used by Federal agencies to determine whether any eligible project has the potential to have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment. Any project that has the potential to have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment would not be eligible for coverage under the PEA for the WIFIA Program and would require subsequent project-specific NEPA documentation.

Mitigation, Monitoring, and Enforcement

Potential mitigation, monitoring, and enforcement measures have been identified within the PEA to address potential adverse impacts. Specific mitigation, monitoring, and enforcement measurements will be unique to the project type and location and disclosed within Appendix A: Environmental Questionnaire for WIFIA Credit Assistance Projects. These measures are considered a part of the Selected Alternative. The authority to implement these measures are derived from the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, Section 7 consultation from the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, and the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

Finding

The PEA evaluated the reasonably foreseeable effects of the No Action and Selected Alternative.

In determining the degree of significance, the following were considered:

1. Short- and long-term effects; Eligible projects may cause short-term construction-related impacts to air quality (PEA §4.2.4.2), noise (PEA §4.3.4.2), traffic (PEA §4.9.4.2), geology and soils (PEA §4.4.4.2), and biological resources (PEA §4.6.4.2), primarily through dust, emissions, temporary lane closures, ground disturbance, and habitat disruption. These effects are localized, temporary, and mitigated through BMPs and regulatory compliance. Long-term beneficial effects include improved water quality and reliability through advanced treatment and potable reuse (PEA §4.5.4.3), enhanced resilience to flooding (PEA §4.5.4.2), and reduced pollutant discharges. Long-term adverse effects are minimal and primarily associated with incremental operational emissions and localized noise (PEA §4.2.4.2; §4.3.4.2), which remain below significance thresholds.
2. Beneficial and adverse effects; Eligible projects beneficial effects may include improved water supply reliability and drought resilience (PEA §4.5.4.3), enhanced public health protection through advanced treatment (PEA §4.5.4.2), and socioeconomic benefits from infrastructure investment (PEA §4.8.4.2). Adverse effects include temporary construction impacts to air quality (PEA §4.2.4.2), noise (PEA §4.3.4.2), traffic (PEA §4.9.4.2), and biological resources (PEA §4.6.4.2), as well as potential disturbance to cultural resources (PEA §4.7.4.2). These adverse effects are localized and mitigated through BMPs, consultation processes, and compliance with Federal and state regulations (PEA §3).
3. Effects on public health and safety; Eligible projects will include robust safety measures during construction and operation (PEA §4.12.4), including compliance with hazardous materials regulations (PEA §4.11.4) and implementation of health

and safety plans. Advanced treatment processes meet or exceed regulatory standards for potable reuse (PEA §4.5.4.2), reducing risks to public health. No significant long-term health or safety concerns are anticipated.

4. Economic effects; Eligible projects will provide economic benefits through WIFIA financing and job creation during construction (PEA §4.8.4.2), while improving affordability by spreading costs over the useful life of assets (PEA §1.4.3; §2 Purpose and Need). Long-term economic gains include enhanced water supply reliability and reduced risk of costly service disruptions PEA (§4.10.4.2). No significant adverse economic impacts are identified.
5. Effects on the quality of life of the American people. Eligible projects will contribute to improved quality of life by securing safe and reliable water resources (§4.5.4.3), reducing flood and climate-related risks (PEA §4.5.4.2), and protecting environmental and public health (PEA §4.12.4). Community disruption is minimized through mitigation of construction impacts (PEA §4.2.4.2; §4.3.4.2; §4.9.4.2).

Reclamation will coordinate with appropriate Federal, state, and local entities through permitting and consulting procedures for eligible projects. Reclamation reviewed the Selected Alternative for conformance with land use plans, and compliance with laws pertinent to the decision. The following are relevant findings of the Selected Alternative, with respect to the plans and laws associated with the affected environment.

- National Historic Preservation Act
 - The PEA §4.7 considers the potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on cultural resources and historical properties. It also discusses the need for eligible projects to evaluate these impacts and, where appropriate, consult under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- Endangered Species Act
 - The PEA §4.6.2.2 considers the potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on federally listed endangered species. It also discusses the need for eligible projects to evaluate these impacts and, where appropriate, consult under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act.
- Clean Air Act
 - The PEA §4.2.1.1 considers the potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on air quality resources. It also discusses the need for eligible projects to evaluate these impacts and, where appropriate, undergo conformity analysis and permitting under the Clean Air Act.
- Clean Water Act
 - The PEA §4.5.2.1 considers the potential impacts of the Selected Alternative on water resources. It also discusses the potential for eligible

projects to consider these impacts and, where appropriate, acquire permits under the Clean Water Act.

EPA published the PEA and the preliminary FONSI on April 24, 2018, for public comment. The public comment period ended on May 29, 2019, with no substantive comments received.

After consideration of the information described above and analysis contained within the PEA, Reclamation finds that the Selected Alternative would not have a significant impact on the human environment.

Decision

The Selected Alternative best meets the purpose and need to support the WIFIA program's mission to accelerate investment in our nation's water and wastewater infrastructure by providing long-term, low-cost supplemental credit assistance under customized terms to creditworthy water and wastewater projects of national and regional significance. All practicable means to avoid or minimize environmental harm from the Proposed Action are adopted with this decision. Reclamation will consider potential projects for inclusion under the PEA through the use of the PEA's Appendix A: WIFIA PEA Questionnaire and Supporting Document Checklist. The PEA Environmental Questionnaire helps verify the applicability of the PEA for a WIFIA funded project, and a final decision for an individual project will be made at that time.

Under the Department of the Interior Handbook of NEPA Implementation Procedures (516 DM 1), Reclamation may rely upon the analysis in the programmatic environmental impact statement or EA of another agency that is more than 5 years old after evaluating it and verifying that reliance on the analysis remains valid. Reclamation has evaluated the PEA for the WIFIA Program and verified that no substantial new circumstances or information about the significance of adverse effects that bear on the analysis.

This document certifies that Reclamation has considered all relevant information raised in the NEPA process and that the NEPA process for adoption the PEA has concluded. The Responsible Official has decided to adopt the FONSI.

Certified by:

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