

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT

DRAFT FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Castaic Lake Water Agency, Recycled Water Program, Phase 2A Project,
Santa Clarita, California
May, 2011

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Region 9 intends to award a grant in the amount of \$1,012,000 to the Castaic Lake Water Agency, in accordance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2004 (PL 108-199) and the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2005 (PL 108-447).

EPA Region 9's award of a grant for the proposed project is a federal action requiring compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), 42 USC §§4321-4370f. In accordance with NEPA, Council of Environmental Quality Regulations at 40 CFR §§1500.1-1508.28, and EPA NEPA regulations at 40 CFR Part 6, EPA Region 9 has prepared an environmental assessment (EA) describing the potential environmental impacts associated with, and the alternatives to, the proposed project. This finding of no significant impact (FONSI) documents EPA Region 9's decision the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

Project Location and Description

The Castaic Lake Water Agency (CLWA) has prepared a Recycled Water Master Plan (RWMP) to deliver recycled water to the Santa Clarita Valley. The RWMP, Phase 2 will provide approximately 1,740 acre-feet per year (afy) of recycled water to CLWA customers. EPA is providing funding for Phase 2A. Phase 2A will divert 511 afy of recycled water from the Saugus Water Reclamation Plant to augment potable water supplies within the CLWA's service area. Phase 2A of the recycled water pipeline project includes pump site alternatives, reservoir site alternatives and transmission system alternatives.

Purpose and Need for Proposed Project

Implementation of the Phase 2A project will provide infrastructure capable of providing recycled water to new users of the CLWA. Recycled water conservation will reduce water demand from the state water program and reduce the demand on groundwater supply.

Environmental Consequences

The project has been designed to minimize impact to the environment. Developed areas represent the majority of the right-of-way along the proposed pipeline alignment. These areas consist of all paved areas including the road and paved shoulder, gutters, curbs and sidewalks. Developed areas are entirely devoid of vegetation. The location of the proposed reservoir tank and associated pipeline is located in open space. The site is undeveloped, but is degraded due to prior and ongoing disturbances, including discing, dumping, unpaved roadways, foundations of former buildings and associated nonnative landscape plantings. Construction of the pipeline and reservoir tank would be constructed in disturbed areas.

Since this area is surrounded by open space, biological surveys were conducted to determine whether the proposed project could potentially impact the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) and the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*). Following discussions and a site visit with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, it was determined the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect these federal listed endangered species.

In addition, EPA consulted with the Office of Historic Preservation to ensure the project complied with the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. In a letter to EPA dated April 27, 2011, the State Historic Preservation Officer determined there will be no adverse effects to historic properties from this undertaking.

The mitigation measures as set forth in Section 4.0 *Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences* of the EA for the proposed project are enforceable under this FONSI.

After carefully considering the regulatory, environmental (both natural and human) and socio-economic factors as described in the EA, EPA Region 9 has not identified any significant impacts to the environment that would result from implementation of the proposed project.

Public Review

The EA is on file and available for public review at the EPA Region 9 office. To make an appointment to review the EA, contact Elizabeth Goldmann at the address given below. The EA is also available on EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/region9/nepa/epa-generated/>.

Copies of the EA are also available for public review at the Los Angeles County Library - Newhall, Los Angeles County Library - Valencia and the Ventura County Library.

Interested parties may submit comments on the EA and this unsigned FONSI to EPA Region 9 by 5:00 p.m. on June 8, 2011.

Comments via letter, fax, or email should be sent to Elizabeth Goldmann at the following address:

EPA Region 9, WTR-8
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94015-3901
telephone: 415-972-3398
fax: 415-947-3537
email: Goldmann.elizabeth@EPA.GOV

EPA Region 9 will not take administrative action on the proposed project prior to the close of the comment period. If, after considering public comments, EPA Region 9 concludes the proposed project will not have significant environmental impacts, EPA Region 9 will revise this FONSI by adding a summary of the comments received and EPA Region 9's responses. The revised FONSI will be forwarded to the Water Division Director for review and signature. The FONSI will be final upon signature. EPA Region 9 will not recirculate the signed FONSI for public review, but will make it available to any individual upon request.