

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

Proposed Finding of No Significant Impact
Lenwood / High Desert Estates Sewer Project
Barstow, California

Finding: After review of the Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) and information received during the public comment period EPA has determined that the proposed Lenwood/High Desert Estates Sewer Project will not have a significant impact on the human environment and that further National Environmental Policy Act documentation is not required. To ensure that potential adverse impacts which may occur during construction are minimized, the mitigation measures identified in the EA/IS and referenced below (Environmental Consequences and Conditions) will be required as conditions of EPA project funding.

Approved: _____
Laura Yoshii, Acting Regional Administrator

Date: _____

Project Background and Purpose:

Lenwood and High Desert Estates are unincorporated communities near the City of Barstow which currently have deficient infrastructure for managing sewage. Lenwood, which comprises 798 lots, 599 of which are developed, currently experiences significant health and nuisance problems when septic tank leachate rises toward the surface in areas with poor percolation. High Desert Estates, a 205 unit mobile home park, currently has a private sewage collection system which, due to design defects, is not functioning well, resulting in buildup of corrosive hydrogen sulfide gases which damage manholes and collection lines. The local Homeowners' Association has incurred high repair and maintenance costs due to this damage.

The proposed project would address these problems by upgrading the sewer infrastructure in the two areas. EPA proposes to award a grant of funds to assist the project. Additional funding will come through a U.S. Department of Agriculture grant and loan under the Rural Utilities Service Water and Waste Disposal Program.

Project Description:

There are two components of the proposed action:

In Lenwood, the project will provide a gravity-flow sewer service to 798 parcels (599 developed parcels and undeveloped 199 parcels). Construction includes installing 42,820 linear feet of eight-inch sewer line along streets for collection, placing lateral connections from streets to homes, repaving streets to patch pavement cuts, pumping out and backfilling septic tanks, and paying fees for connection to the City of Barstow Water Reclamation Facility. The collection lines will tie into the City of Barstow trunk line located adjacent to Route 66.

In High Desert Estates, the project will replace the existing, non-functioning wet-well/main-force system and provide new gravity-flow sewer service to the 205 parcels. Work includes installing a new, 12,540 foot gravity flow sewer line with 31 manholes; removing the wet well and replacing it with a manhole; and abandoning the existing four-inch force main. After the proposed project is built, the City of Barstow will assume responsibility for operating and maintaining the new gravity flow sewer line.

Other action alternatives were not evaluated in the EA/IS. Under the no action alternative Lenwood would retain the existing septic systems and continue to experience associated water quality and public health problems. High Desert Estates would continue to use the existing, inadequate wet-well/force-main system.

Environmental Consequences and Conditions:

In compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and California Environmental Quality Act, the lead agencies U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and San Bernardino County Office of Special Districts, have prepared an Environmental Assessment/Initial Study (EA/IS) that analyzes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project. This analysis supports a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). Most potential adverse impacts are minor and would occur during construction activities over a period of approximately four months. These impacts can be reduced by a number of mitigation and control measures which are enumerated in the EA/IS and which will be conditions of EPA grant award. Environmental consequences and conditions to mitigate impacts are summarized below; full documentation is available in the EA/IS.

Desert Tortoise/Endangered Species Act Compliance: The project area is suitable habitat for the desert tortoise, which is listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act as “threatened.” In November 2000 a detailed site survey following protocols set by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) did not discover any evidence of tortoises. Based on the current survey information, U.S. EPA has concluded that the proposed project will not affect the tortoise and has requested concurrence from the FWS.

Water Quality and Hydrology: The project will not affect the local natural groundwater table. Existing shallow groundwater contamination from septic tanks will be eliminated. Impacts to local surface drainage and increased erosion and siltation will be minor and temporary. Best management

practices will be implemented during construction to reduce erosion and control surface runoff. The project will be required to obtain a NPDES construction stormwater permit through the State Water Resources Control Board, for implementation through the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Air Quality: The project will disturb approximately 19 acres, generating fugitive dust (PM10) near residences. Dust control measures pursuant to the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District's PM10 Attainment Plan will be required. Emissions from equipment and construction traffic, and anticipated exposure levels at sensitive receptors, are not significant; however, the project will incorporate measures to reduce emissions during construction.

Sewage Treatment Capacity: The proposed project will not require any changes in facilities at the existing Barstow Water Reclamation Facility and will not significantly affect available treatment capacity. The Facility currently processes 2.7 million gallons per day (MGD) and has an overall capacity of 4.5 MGD. Tying in the Lenwood sewage at the current level of development would raise average daily flows to approximately 2.8 MGD. In the future development of the other 402 lots served by this project would contribute another 0.1 MGD.

The EA/IS contains a complete list of mitigation practices for these subjects as well as road and railroad traffic during construction, soil stabilization, accidental sewage spills or sewage line breaks, avoiding effects on any hazardous materials sites in the general project area, any cultural resources uncovered during construction, and noise reduction. All mitigation measures are adopted as conditions of Finding of No Significant Impact and subsequent implementation of the project.

Public Review:

During the 30-day public comment period, the EA/IS is on file and available for public inspection at the following locations:

Barstow Branch Library
304 Buena Vista Street
Barstow, CA 92311

Planning Department
City of Barstow
220 East Mountain View
Barstow, CA 92311-2888

San Bernardino County
Office of Special Districts
157 West Fifth Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0450

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Region 9
75 Hawthorne Street -- Library
San Francisco, CA 94105

These documents will also be posted on the EPA Region 9 website at
<http://www.epa.gov/region09/water/>.

Comments may be submitted no later than February 27, 2001 to:

San Bernardino County
Office of Special Districts
157 West Fifth Street, 2nd Floor
San Bernardino, CA 92415-0450

The EPA contact for this project is:

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After EPA and the County of San Bernardino assess any comments received, those comments, agency responses, and this FONSI will be forwarded to the EPA Regional Administrator for review and signature. If the FONSI is signed by the Regional Administrator, it will be available to any individual upon request.