

June 29, 2016

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION

TO ALL INTERESTED AGENCIES AND PUBLIC GROUPS:

As provided by the state environmental review process adopted in the rules of the Texas Water Development Board (TWDB) 31 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 375, subchapter E, for projects to be funded through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Non-Equivalency Program and consistent with the National Environmental Policy Act, 42 U.S. Code §4321, et seq., the Executive Administrator of the Board has determined that the proposed action identified below may be exempted from formal environmental review requirements:

Laguna Madre Water District, Cameron County, Texas
Port Isabel WWTP Phase I Improvements Project
CWSRF Project No. 73730
Total Estimated TWDB Commitment: \$5,815,000

Laguna Madre Water District (District) is proposing to use funding from a CWSRF loan to make improvements to its existing Port Isabel Wastewater Treatment Plant, including installing a new blower, new return activated sludge/waste activated sludge (RAS/WAS) pump station, two additional sludge holding tanks, and new headworks on the existing plant site as well as replacing the plant's aeration basin, digester diffusers, air piping, and electrical system and controls. These proposed improvements are Phase 1 of a multi-phase project intended to implement wastewater reuse to supplement the District's water supply for the local community. Based on current estimates, reuse can supply over 900 acre-feet per year of water, which would help the District to reduce its water supply gap during drought conditions. Port Isabel Wastewater Treatment Plant Improvements are necessary to meet feed water quality requirements for a future advanced water treatment plant that is intended to discharge reclaimed water and augment the District's surface water supply by approximately 986 acre-feet per year for potable reuse based on the Port Isabel Wastewater Treatment Plant's current permitted treatment capacity. The improvements comprising the project's first phase will also increase the reliability, operability, and efficiency of the treatment plant while maintaining the current capacity and flows.

Categorical Exclusion
Laguna Madre Water District
CWSRF Project No. 73730
June 29, 2016
Page 2

All construction will occur on the site of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Environmental impacts should be similar to rehabilitation activities. TWDB staff has reviewed the Texas Historical Commission's Archeological Sites Atlas and determined that the project is not likely to affect any significant or potentially significant cultural resources. The project will not adversely impact wetlands or waters of the U.S. that are under the jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers. In addition, construction within the site of the existing plant is not expected to impact threatened or endangered species or habitat.

This decision is allowed because the specified project elements should not entail significant adverse impacts to the quality of the human environment. Documentation supporting this determination is on file at the TWDB.

This determination shall be revoked if it is found that:

- (1) the project no longer meets the requirements for a CE as a result of changes in the project;
- (2) the project involves extraordinary circumstances as described in 31 TAC Chapter 375, Subchapter E; or
- (3) the project may violate or has violated federal, state, local, or tribal laws.

The project also must comply with the following conditions:

- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of cultural resources; and,
- Standard emergency condition for the discovery of threatened and endangered species.

Comments regarding this determination may be submitted to the Director of Regional Water Planning and Development, Texas Water Development Board, P.O. Box 13231, Austin, Texas 78711-3231.

Sincerely,



Jessica Zuba, Deputy Executive Administrator

NH/JZ: ar

Attachment



Figure A
LAGUNA MADRE WATER DISTRICT