

United States Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Interior Region 8: Lower Colorado Basin  
Phoenix Area Office

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

PROPOSED DISCLAIMING OF INTEREST IN 26 EXISTING GROUNDWATER PUMPING  
PLANTS AND PROPOSED APPROVAL OF A SUPPLEMENTAL AGREEMENT AMONG THE  
ROOSEVELT IRRIGATION DISTRICT, SALT RIVER PROJECT AGRICULTURAL  
IMPROVEMENT AND POWER DISTRICT, SALT RIVER VALLEY WATER USERS'  
ASSOCIATION AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Approved: LESLIE MEYERS Digitally signed by LESLIE  
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Date: 2020.07.23 13:04:51 -07'00' Date: 7/23/20  
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FONSI No.: PXAO 20-01

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## Introduction or Background

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze the potential environmental impacts attributed to the following proposed Reclamation actions: (1) the disclaiming of interests in 26 existing groundwater pumping plants (Eastside Wells) operated by Roosevelt Irrigation District (RID) pursuant to an existing 1921 Agreement, as amended, and supplemented in 1927 and 1950 (Existing Agreement), and (2) the proposed approval of a 2020 Supplemental Agreement (2020 Supplement) to the Existing Agreement between RID, the Salt River Project Agricultural Improvement and Power District and the Salt River Valley Water Users' Association (collectively, "SRP"). The 2020 Supplement would be entered into by and among RID, SRP, and Reclamation, pursuant to the authority of the Reclamation Act of 1902 (43 United States Code (USC) § 371 to 600e), including Section 1 of the Warren Act (43 USC § 523 to 525).

## Public Involvement

Reclamation solicited input from the public on the proposed action to assist in identifying key issues and defining the scope of the project and environmental analysis. Reclamation conducted scoping via e-mail and internet publication; project information was sent to the agencies and entities listed in Section 3.0. A 15-day scoping period was initiated April 21, 2020, and closed on May 6, 2020 (Appendix A). No comments were received.

The draft EA was published on June 19, 2020, and public comments were accepted from June 19, 2020 to July 4, 2020. Reclamation emailed notices of the draft EA publication to the project mailing list and posted the draft EA on the internet. No comments were received.

## Major Considerations

The following issues were addressed in the EA and have been taken into consideration in Reclamation's determination of whether a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is appropriate, or an environmental impact statement should be prepared.

1. The proposed action would impact resources as described in Chapter 3 of the EA. No new land disturbing activities will occur as a result of the proposed action. Therefore, there will be no direct adverse impacts resulting from the proposed action. Project water would continue to be pumped from the Eastside Wells and delivered through existing infrastructure by RID for agricultural use. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA are considered significant.

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2. The proposed action would have a negligible impact on public health and safety. Under the proposed action, groundwater pumping in the action area would continue unchanged. The proposed action would make no direct contribution of hazardous wastes to an already contaminated area; therefore, no additional hazardous waste impact is expected in the action area as a result of the proposed action. Groundwater pumping by RID from groundwater wells within the West Van Buren Area (WVBA) would continue to withdraw contaminated water from the area and would continue to contain further spread of groundwater contaminated with hazardous wastes to surrounding areas.

Tests of the groundwater in the WVBA have shown some wells contain Trichloroethylene (TCE) and Tetrachloroethylene (PCE) at levels above safe drinking water standards. RID operates 20 agricultural wells within the WVBA that pump water containing PCE and TCE and send it flowing through canals to irrigate cotton and alfalfa fields in the West Valley. Studies have shown that, as the water is discharged from the well heads into the canal system, it releases measurable amounts of TCE and PCE into the air. These quickly become airborne and disperse into the atmosphere once the water is pumped into and begins flowing through the canals (Synergy Environmental, LLC, 2011). Study results demonstrate that locations in the RID water systems did exceed air inhalation screening criteria at the point of discharge from the groundwater wells to the canal, but concluded these locations are not likely to provide a reasonable public exposure pathway due to their physical nature and distance away from people and animals (Synergy Environmental, LLC, 2011). State of Arizona environmental regulators have also issued statements of findings that groundwater contaminated with TCE and PCE pumped out of the Eastside Wells into RID canals are releasing TCE and PCE into the air at such low levels they pose no significant risk to public health (ADEQ 2012; ADHS 2015).

3. The proposed action is not expected to have an adverse effect on the quality of the human environment. No disproportionately high or adverse human health or environmental effects on minority and/or low-income populations would occur as a result of the proposed action.
4. The proposed action would not have direct adverse impacts to unique characteristics of the geographic area such as park lands, prime and unique farmlands, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.
5. The proposed action is a continuation of ongoing activities requiring no new infrastructure or ground disturbing activities and would not have highly uncertain and potentially significant effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.
6. The proposed action does not establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects and does not represent a decision in principle about a future consideration.
7. Significant adverse cumulative effects resulting from the proposed action are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the project's effects is contained in Chapter 3 of the EA.

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8. The proposed action would require no new infrastructure or ground disturbing activities. Therefore, the proposed action would not adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places or cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.
  9. The proposed action does not require new infrastructure or ground disturbing activities and the quantities of water pumped from the Eastside Wells would not exceed baseline conditions. No new impacts or negative effects to existing vegetation, local wildlife, or federally listed species or critical habitat in the project area are expected as a result of the proposed action.
  10. The proposed action does not violate any known Federal, State, or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.
  11. The proposed action would not adversely affect Indian trust assets, or limit access to, or ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands.

## Finding of No Significant Impact

Based upon the attached Final EA, Reclamation has determined the proposed action would not have a significant adverse effect on the human environment, and an environmental impact statement is not warranted.

## Literature Cited

Arizona Department of Environmental Quality, 2012, *Remedial Investigation Report West Van Buren Area WQARF Registry Site*, Phoenix, AZ.

Arizona Department of Health Services, 2015, *Evaluation of Water Sampling Results in the Roosevelt Irrigation District*, Phoenix, AZ.

Synergy Environmental, LLC., 2011, *Public Health Assessment and Mitigation Summary Report*, West Van Buren Area Water Quality Assurance Revolving Fund Site, Phoenix, AZ.