

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## Finding Of No Significant Impact

# Cawelo Water District Famoso Basin Pipeline Project

FONSI 17-21-MP

Prepared by:



Nathaniel J. Martin  
Natural Resource Specialist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date:

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Concurred by:



Thomas Hawes  
Water Conservation Specialist  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date:

3/8/18

Approved by:



Richard Woodley  
Regional Resources Manager  
Mid-Pacific Regional Office

Date:

3/8/18



# **1 Background**

In accordance with Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) prepared an Environmental Assessment (EA) to analyze impacts of granting a WaterSMART Water Use Efficiency Grant to the Cawelo Water District (CWD) for the Famoso Basin Pipeline Project.

The Proposed Action is located northwest of Bakersfield between the Friant-Kern Canal (FKC) and Highway 99, just south of State Route 46, in Kern County. CWD would replace the use of 2.4 miles of unlined canals by installing a 1.8-mile-long, 36-inch-diameter, bi-directional, intertie pipeline, connecting the canal to CWD's Reservoir and Pump Station D.

## **2 Alternatives Including the Proposed Action**

### **2.1 No Action**

For the No Action Alternative, Reclamation would not issue an SF-299 federal lands encroachment permit and would not award CWD \$750,000 in CALFED grant funds for the Proposed Action. Although it is possible that CWD may find alternate sources of funding for the Proposed Action, for the purposes of this EA, the consequences of Reclamation not providing funding for the Proposed Action would result in no pipeline construction and no water savings equal to 1,229 AFY.

### **2.2 Proposed Action**

Reclamation would provide partial funding through a CALFED grant of \$750,000 to CWD for construction of the Proposed Action, allowing for the efficient conveyance and return of surface water between CWD and the FKC saving approximately 1,229 acre-feet per year in seepage losses. Using the grant, CWD would construct a 1.8-mile long, 36-inch-diameter, bi-directional, intertie pipeline to replace the use of 2.4 miles of unlined canals. The bi-directional pipeline would connect to the FKC approximately a half mile south of State Route 46, and run 1.8 miles in an easterly direction within an existing dirt road until it reaches the Lerdo Canal. The pipeline would cross the Lerdo Canal and continue within an existing dirt road to reach Highway 99, south bound. CWD or its contractor would bore underneath the north and south bound lanes of Highway 99 and Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway to reach Pump Station and Reservoir D. In order to construct the pipeline and connect to the FKC, Reclamation would grant an

SF-299 federal lands encroachment permit to CWD to allow construction within the FKC right-of-way (ROW).

## **2.3 Comment Received on the EA**

Reclamation provided the public an opportunity to comment on the EA from February 12, 2018 to February 23, 2018. One letter was received from Arvin-Edison Water Storage District (AEWSD) on February 23, 2018. AEWSD's primary concern related to the potential discharge of non-project water into the FKC potentially causing significant water quality impacts to AEWSD's surface and groundwater irrigation supplies and water banking programs.

The Proposed Action will not result in conveyance of additional Non-Project water in the FKC above that which CWD is currently permitted. The proposed 1.8-mile pipeline will be replacing an existing 2.4-mile canal, and operation of the pipeline would be similar to that of the existing canal. No additional analysis of impacts to water quality is warranted as there would be no changes in the existing sources and quantities of introduced water as a result of providing grant funding to CWD.

## **3 Findings**

Based on the attached EA, Reclamation finds that the Proposed Action is not a major Federal action that will significantly affect the quality of the human environment. The EA incorporates by reference the CWD Initial Study and Proposed Negative Declaration (IS/MND), which describes the existing environmental resources in the area of the Proposed Action, and evaluates the effects of the project on those resources. The IS/MND was certified by the district in December 2017. All resources analyzed in the IS/MND were found to either be less than significant or less than significant with mitigation measures incorporated.

The EA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508), and Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR Part 46). Analysis of the effects of the proposed action is provided in the attached EA, and the analysis in the EA is hereby incorporated by reference.

Following are the reasons why the impacts of the proposed action are not significant:

1. The proposed action will not significantly affect public health or safety (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(2)).
2. The proposed action will not significantly impact natural resources and unique geographical characteristics such as historic or cultural resources; parks, recreation, and refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking

water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order (EO) 11990); flood plains (EO 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(3) and 43 CFR 46.215(b)).

3. The proposed action will not have possible effects on the human environment that are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(5)).
4. The proposed action will neither establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects nor represent a decision in principle about a future consideration (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(6)).
5. There is no potential for the effects to be considered highly controversial (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4)).
6. The proposed action will not have significant cumulative impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)).
7. The proposed action will not adversely affect any districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(8)). Reclamation determined that the FKC was a historic property that may be affected, and asked the State Historic Preservation Officer to concur with our finding that the Proposed Action would result in no adverse effect to the FKC pursuant to 36 CFR § 800.5(b). Through correspondence dated December 20, 2017, the SHPO responded with no objection to Reclamation's finding.
8. The proposed action would not adversely affect listed or proposed threatened or endangered species (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(9)). Reclamation determined that the action may affect listed species, but is not likely to adversely affect listed species, and the US Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with Reclamation on February 1, 2018 that the proposed action was not likely to adversely affect these species.
9. The proposed action will not violate federal, state, tribal or local law or requirements imposed for the protection of the environment (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(10)).
10. The proposed action will not affect Indian Trust Assets (512 DM 2, Policy Memorandum dated December 15, 1993).
11. Implementing the proposed action will not disproportionately affect minorities or low-income populations and communities (EO 12898).
12. The proposed action will not limit access to, and ceremonial use of, Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (EO 13007 and 512 DM 3).