

**Federal Emergency Management Agency  
(FEMA)**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT (FONSI)  
for  
Relocation of Emerald Coast Utilities Authority's  
Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant  
Escambia County, Florida  
FEMA-1551-DR-FL**

**Background**

ECUA has applied to FEMA for assistance with a project for the MSWWTP in Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida. The already outdated WWTP was devastated by storm surge associated with Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. The MSWWTP was rendered inoperable for three days, resulting in the release of raw sewage into the adjacent neighborhoods and Pensacola Bay. FEMA's Public Assistance Program is considering providing funding as an Improved Project under Presidential Disaster Declaration FEMA-1551-DR-FL.

After careful consideration, ECUA has decided not to repair the Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant (MSWWTP) in downtown Pensacola. Due to its advanced age and improvement limitations imposed by the existing site, the plant is unable to consistently treat incoming wastewater at required levels. Instead, they have determined that it is in the public's best interest to relocate the WWTP to an undeveloped 976-acre parcel at a new location in central Escambia County, located 25 miles north of the existing MSWWTP. The proposed project would also include the installation of approximately 24 miles of 16- to 48-inch diameter transmission mains. Three new regional lift stations would also be built to transport wastewater to the Proposed Alternative location. Treated wastewater would be reused by an industrial partner with the remainder being disposed of using upland spray irrigation and infiltration basins. The potential for the release of untreated sewage into downtown Pensacola would be eliminated and discharge of treated wastewater into Pensacola Bay would be terminated.

**Finding**

The purpose of the EA is to analyze the potential environmental impacts of the proposed relocation project, and to determine whether to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). In EA process FEMA evaluated the following alternatives: No Action Alternative, Repair in Place Alternative, and the Proposed Alternative.

Relocating the plant would have a beneficial effect on the environment by removing the threat of untreated sewage being released from the existing facility into downtown Pensacola. Elimination of ongoing point source and storm related sewage discharges into Pensacola Bay would occur as a result of the proposed action. Because of previous ecological alteration (conversion of native

vegetation to monotypic pine plantation) and planned mitigation, the environmental consequences at the proposed project site would be minimal. Highly treated effluent would be reused for industrial purposes then disposed of through land application with insignificant impacts to water quality and aquatic resources. Anticipated environmental impacts would, to the extent practicable and as required by federal, state, and local statutes and regulations, be avoided, minimized, and offset (mitigated).

In accordance with 44 CFR Part 10.8 (d)(3)(x), FEMA has determined that the proposed alternative would not have significant individual or cumulative adverse effects when combined with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. No significant adverse impacts to geological and hydrological features; floodplains; wetlands and jurisdictional waters of the U.S.; water quality; air quality; vegetation; wildlife; state and federally listed threatened and endangered species; cultural resources; socioeconomics (including minority and low income populations); safety and security; and traffic and transportation would occur. No work would occur within identified units of the Coastal Barriers Resource Act. No unacceptable discharge of hazardous materials or toxic waste are planned or anticipated.

The Draft EA was made available to interested parties through publication on FEMA’s website ([www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/index.shtm](http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/index.shtm)) and by distribution to Pensacola Public Library and the ECUA Customer Service Building. Notification of availability of the Draft EA was published in the *Pensacola News Journal* newspaper on January 12 and 13, 2008.

**Conclusion**

Based on the findings of the attached Environmental Assessment, coordination with the appropriate agencies, and adherence to the project conditions set forth in the EA, and in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA (44 CFR Parts 1500 through 1508) and FEMA regulations for environmental consideration pertaining to NEPA compliance (44 CFR Part 10), FEMA has determined that the proposed action will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the biological or human environments. As a result of this FONSI, an EIS will not be prepared and the proposed project as described in the attached EA may proceed.

**Approved:**

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Richard Myers	Date
FEMA Environmental Liaison Officer	

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Martin Altman	Date
FEMA Infrastructure Branch Chief	