

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### **Notice of availability of the Draft Environmental Assessment for the proposed Relocation of the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority's Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant, Escambia County, Florida (FEMA-1551-DR-FL)**

Interested parties are hereby notified that the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) is considering providing funds through the Public Assistance (PA) Program to assist in relocating the Emerald Coast Utilities Authority's (ECUA) Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant (MSWWTP) from its existing site in downtown Pensacola to a new site approximately 25 miles north of its current location. Both sites are located in Escambia County, Florida. Construction of a wastewater transmission system and three lift stations would also be required. The Environmental Assessment (EA) is prepared in accordance with Section 102 of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended; and the Regulations for Implementation of the National Environmental Policy Act (40 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Parts 1500 to 1508). This Draft EA summarizes the purpose and need of the proposed project, and addresses a number of topics including feasible alternatives that are being considered, environmental impacts of the alternatives, and mitigation of significant adverse impacts.

The ECUA has operated the MSWWTP, which services the majority of Escambia County, in downtown Pensacola, Florida since 1937. Due to its advanced age and the limitations of the relatively small (18-acre) site, the MSWWTP has been unable to consistently treat the incoming wastewater to the level required by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection. When Hurricane Ivan struck Pensacola in September 2004, it rendered the MSWWTP inoperable for three days. The shutdown caused numerous health and safety risks by releasing raw sewage into the streets of Pensacola and nearby Pensacola Bay. Repairing the facility at the current location would be an improvement over existing conditions; however, significant impacts involving public health and safety, the quality of life and property values in the neighborhood surrounding the MSWWTP, and point source discharges into Pensacola Bay would continue. Therefore, ECUA is proposing to replace the MSWWTP at a new location and has applied for funding for this relocation from FEMA under disaster declaration FEMA-1551-DR -FL.

The Proposed Alternative would result in closure and dismantling of the MSWWTP and relocation of its functions to a new facility on a 976-acre parcel of undeveloped land. The proposed site is located at 2980 Old Chemstrand Road (Latitude 30.588996 N and Longitude 87.262429 W). The site is approximately 25 miles north and inland of the existing facility, and is currently zoned for industrial use. The vast majority of the property was previously used for silviculture and consisted of planted pine trees that had been cleared prior to ECUA ownership.

The new plant facility will be constructed on a 40-acre site located outside of the floodplain. The proposed project also includes the installation of approximately 24 miles wastewater transmission mains and three new regional lift stations for transport of wastewater to the Proposed Alternative location. Existing utility corridors will be utilized whenever possible. Treated wastewater would be reused for industrial purposes with the remainder of the effluent being disposed of using upland spray irrigation and infiltration basins. The existing plant would be abandoned and adapted for reuse according to current codes and standards. 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. All anticipated environmental impacts would be fully offset via development and implementation of a comprehensive mitigation plan.

**FEMA has determined that the proposed action to relocate the MSWWTP will have no significant adverse impact on the quality of the biological or human environments. It is important that we receive your input on the Draft EA to ensure that all relevant issues and concerns of the residents of Escambia County are considered and addressed. Copies of the Draft EA may be viewed at the following locations:**

ECUA Main Street Wastewater Treatment Plant  
401 West Main St  
Pensacola, FL 32591  
850-969-3380 ext. 4224

Pensacola Public Library  
200 W. Gregory Street  
Pensacola, FL 32502  
(850) 436-5060

The Draft EA is also available online at ECUA's website at <http://www.ecua.org> or on FEMA's website at <http://www.fema.gov/plan/ehp/envdocuments/ea-region4.shtm#2>. For information on the availability of appendices which were not posted due to size formatting issues, please use contact instructions provided below.

You may provide your comments on the EA by mailing, faxing, or emailing them to the following address:

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OR

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Federal Emergency Management Agency  
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Comments must be received by February 14, 2008. If no substantive comments are received following agency and public review, the draft EA will be considered the final EA and no substantive additional information or modifications will be incorporated. We look forward to your input.