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FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT Laguna Reservoir Restoration Project

U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Reclamation Yuma Area Office

In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, and based on the following, the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that implementation of the Proposed Action (Alternative 1) to allow for removal of sediment that has accumulated at the All-American Canal Headworks and the California Sluiceway channel by restoring the storage capacity of the Laguna Reservoir on the Colorado River such that sluicing flows from Imperial Dam may be safely captured, would not result in a significant impact on the quality of the human and natural environment. The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) provides details on the Proposed Action and an analysis of potential impacts and should be used as a companion document to this Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI).

The purpose of the proposed dredging above Laguna Dam is to provide increased water storage capacity to capture sluicing flows released from Imperial Dam and to maintain the operational integrity (function ability) of Laguna Dam. Dredging would restore storage behind Laguna Dam from the existing volume of approximately 400 acre-feet (af) to 1,500 af by removing accumulated sediment and nuisance vegetation along the back of Laguna Dam and Weir and in uplands adjacent to the open water channel of the Colorado River. Additional capacity would be created by dredging approximately 27 acres behind the dam, two large upland areas equal to 88 acres adjacent to the open water channel of the Colorado River, and 34 acres within the existing open water of the Colorado River channel. Habitat restoration off-site at the Imperial National Wildlife Refuge would be included as part of the Proposed Action to mitigate impacts on wetlands.

The analysis presented in the EA focused on those resource areas identified as potentially affected by the alternatives considered, including the No Action. Reclamation determined that the potential effects on transportation were negligible and did not conduct further analysis. Reclamation assessed the potential effects on aesthetics; air quality; biological resources; cultural resources; environmental justice; hazards/hazardous materials; hydrology/water quality; Indian Trust Assets; land use; noise; public resources; socioeconomics; and topography, geology, soils, and mineral resources. Based on the project's location and nature, Reclamation determined that the project would have no effect on environmental justice issues, Indian Trust Assets, land use, noise, public resources, socioeconomics, topography, and mineral resources. The potential for impacts on aesthetics, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality, and geologic resources were determined not to be significant because of stringent regulatory and best management practices (BMPs).

Reclamation has identified several BMPs to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects that may result from the Proposed Action. A brief summary of the environmental commitments and practices Reclamation has committed to are listed below:

- Security and night lighting shall be directed downward and inward through use of standard light shields or hoods toward the area to be illuminated, in order to minimize the aesthetic effects of off-site light and glare.

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- To ensure that the Proposed Action produces less than significant air quality impacts, Reclamation shall comply with the requirements of Regulation VIII, as outlined in Chapter 3.2 of the EA.
- The Proposed Action is a covered activity under the Lower Colorado River Multi-Species Conservation Program and accompanying biological and conference opinion for Federal covered actions. With incorporation of avoidance and mitigation measures (AMM3 and AMM6) and project design components to avoid and minimize impacts on wetlands, the expansion of open water habitat within the project area, and compensatory mitigation for all marsh wetlands affected by the Proposed Action, impacts on wildlife, aquatic habitat, and wetlands would be less than significant.
- Project activities within 100 feet of the Laguna Dam shall be monitored by an archaeologist that meets the Secretary of the Interior's professional qualification standards for archaeology.
- Pursuant to Clean Water Act National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements, a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) shall be in place prior to dredging, pipeline construction, road grading, launch ramp construction, and disposal operations. The SWPPP shall include standard BMPs, such as temporary spill containment booms and absorbent pads, to be utilized in accordance with an established spill contingency plan. In addition, the SWPPP shall include erosion control features such as straw wattles, silt fences, revegetation, minimization of grading (to the extent practicable), construction of surface water velocity reducers, and installation of erosion control barriers around stockpiled soil. Such measures shall be implemented in accordance with an established erosion control plan.
- While no significant impacts on hydrology are anticipated, Reclamation will annually monitor Laguna Reservoir water elevations and wetlands associated with the old Colorado River channel to assess the post-project effects of reservoir operations on wetlands that are not directly affected by the proposed dredging.

Based on analysis of the environmental impacts, BMPs, and environmental commitments, as presented in the EA, Reclamation has concluded that implementation of the Proposed Action (Alternative 1) does not pose a significant adverse impact to the quality of the human and natural environment.



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Date