



November 9, 2023

**Preliminary Finding of No Significant Impact
To All Interested Citizens, Organizations, and Government Agencies**

**Fayette County
Rattlesnake Wastewater System Improvements
Loan Number: CS390024-0011**

The attached Environmental Assessment (EA) is for a wastewater treatment plant expansion project in Fayette County which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The EA describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. We would appreciate receiving any comments you may have on the project. Making available this EA and seeking your comments fulfills Ohio EPA's environmental review and public notice requirements for this loan program.

Ohio EPA analyzes environmental effects of proposed projects as part of its WPCLF program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. More information can be obtained by contacting the person named at the end of the attached EA.

Any comments on our preliminary determination should be sent to the email address of the contact named at the end of the EA. We will not act on this project for 30 calendar days from the date of this notice. In the absence of substantive comments during this period, our preliminary decision will become final. After that, Fayette County can then proceed with its application for the WPCLF loan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathleen Courtright".

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief
Division of Environmental & Financial Assistance

Attachment

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Project Identification

Project: Rattlesnake Wastewater System Improvements

Applicant: Fayette County
1600 Robinson Road
Washington Court House, OH 43160

Loan Number: CS390024-0011

Project Summary

Fayette County has requested \$20,000,000 from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the expansion of the Rattlesnake wastewater treatment plant (WWTP). This project is needed in preparation for the development of the Mega Manufacturing Operations site in Fayette County and will treat wastewater from within the industrial area.

Construction for this project will remain within the confines of the existing Rattlesnake WWTP. No adverse environmental impacts are expected.

History & Existing Conditions

Fayette County's Rattlesnake WWTP currently has a design average daily flow of 1.0 million gallons per day (MGD) and is permitted to discharge treated wastewater to Rattlesnake Creek. Present average daily flow is 0.16 MGD. The existing plant was originally built in 1998 and most recently upgraded in 2009. The plant currently consists of liquid stream unit processes including raw sewage pumping, mechanical screening, grit removal, biological treatment, final clarification, return activated sludge/waste activated sludge (RAS/WAS) pumping, UV disinfection, and post-aeration. The solids stream consists of an aerobic digester.

A previous project was funded in August 2023 using WPCLF funds to construct a trunk sewer to assist in conveying the flows that will be generated by industrial users from the proposed 2500-acre industrial site to the Rattlesnake WWTP for treatment. The project is located east of Missouri Ditch between the State Route 435 and Interstate 71 interchange.

Population and Flow Projections

Development is planned for a 2,500-acre greenfield industrial site nearby. A feasibility study was conducted and determined that the Rattlesnake WWTP is able to accommodate the projected flows with modifications, raising the average daily flow to 0.98 MGD.

Alternatives

To address potential flows that will be generated by industrial users from the proposed 2500-acre greenfield industrial site, Fayette County was tasked with evaluating feasible alternatives for improving the WWTP and conveying flow to the existing treatment plant.

- *No Action:* Doing nothing, the “no action” alternative, would leave the planned Fayette County Mega Manufacturing Operations site without access to a wastewater treatment system. Therefore, this is not a feasible alternative.
- *Utilize existing wastewater treatment system:* The cost-effective recommendation proposed is conveying the flows from the industrial site to the existing Rattlesnake WWTP for treatment.

Selected Alternative

The selected alternative for this proposed project is utilizing the existing wastewater treatment system in the Rattlesnake area. The existing Rattlesnake WWTP can accommodate the project flows with modifications.

In addition to the new Missouri Ditch trunk sewer, pump station, and force main improvements, improvements to the WWTP will likely include, but are not limited to:

- Supplemental carbon addition to balance the needed nutrient to biochemical oxygen demand loading
- Metal salts addition for enhanced phosphorus removal
- Screen building improvements
- Grit removal upgrades for increased capacity
- Miscellaneous repairs to Stage 1
- Aeration improvements to Stage 5
- Improvement of the splitter box to the clarifiers
- Repairs to the two inoperable clarifiers
- Replacement of the ultraviolet (UV) disinfection system due to age and operational issues
- Upgrades to return activated sludge (RAS) and waste activated sludge (WAS) pumping
- Upgrades to aerobic digester and sludge processing

Maps of the project location are located in the exhibits below.

Implementation

Project Costs

Fayette County plans to borrow \$20,000,000 from the WPCLF. During the 30-year loan period Fayette County will save \$11,733,659 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 2.00%, compared to the market rate of 4.91%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested loan award.

Project Schedule

The anticipated loan award will occur in January 2024. Construction is expected to begin shortly after loan award and be completed by September 2025.

Public Participation

This project will address flows generated from the planned Fayette County industrial site. Public participation has occurred regarding the planned industrial development as well as needed water/wastewater expansions to accommodate industrial growth. Ohio EPA is unaware of any public opposition to the project.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Environmental Assessment (EA) is available from the project contact named below.

Environmental Impacts

Construction of this project could affect environmental features, but the effects will be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels as explained below.

Air Quality

Fayette County is in attainment for the six regulated criteria air pollutants (carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, lead, particulate matter, and ozone). The contractor will prevent unnecessary creation of dust from construction activities and shall prevent dust attributable to the operations from entering the atmosphere. Dust on unsurfaced streets or parking areas and any remaining dust on surfaced streets shall be controlled with water as needed. Because of this approach, there will be no significant adverse short-term or long-term impacts on local air quality.

Archaeological and Historical Resources

Coordination with the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) found that the site is not eligible for listing on the National Register. A Phase I survey was completed for the future Mega Manufacturing Operations site and determined that the area was deemed unlikely to yield more information about Ohio prehistory or history. To confirm, a Phase II survey was completed within a portion of the planned industrial site and determined that no further archaeological investigations are necessary.

In the event of archaeological finds during construction, Ohio Revised Code Section 149.53 requires contractors and subcontractors to notify SHPO of any archaeological discoveries in the project area, and to cooperate with the Office in archaeological and historic surveys and salvage efforts when appropriate. Work will not resume until a survey of the find and a determination of its value and effect has been made, and Ohio EPA authorizes work to continue.

Terrestrial Habitat and Endangered Species

Three federally listed species occur in Fayette County: the endangered Indiana bat, the endangered northern long-eared bat, and the threatened eastern massasauga rattlesnake. No habitat suited to these endangered species is located within the project area. Based on this information, the project will have no significant adverse short-term or long-term effect on terrestrial habitat or endangered species.

Farmland Protection

Based on the review of the project planning and design, no prime farmland losses are expected as a result of this project.

Floodplains

According to project planning and design, no construction is scheduled to occur within designated flood hazard zones.

Ground Water Resources

To avoid adverse impacts to ground water resources, the construction contract includes specifications for appropriate and safe dewatering of deep excavations and management of ground water.

Safety, Noise, Traffic, and Aesthetics

The contractor shall develop a traffic plan prior to commencing construction which shall include all proper warning signs and lane closures and a commitment to minimize both the extent and duration of the disruption of traffic and disturbance to the neighborhood during construction. For these reasons, the project will not adversely affect noise, traffic, public safety, or aesthetics.

Surface Water Resources

An Ohio EPA General Storm Water NPDES Permit for Construction Activities shall be obtained if necessary and the contractor shall minimize soil from eroding or otherwise entering onto all paved areas and into natural watercourses, ditches, and public sewer systems. Designated Wild and Scenic Rivers will be unaffected by this project as there are none located within the project's vicinity.

Wetlands

According to a review of project planning and design and the Ohio Wetlands Inventory, this project will contain no in-wetland work and therefore will have no impacts to wetland areas.

Energy Use

This project will have little to no effect on local or regional energy supplies as the county plans to utilize the existing Rattlesnake wastewater collection system.

Local Economy

Projected residential sewer bills for new customers are approximately \$365 per year, which is 0.75% of median household income (MHI) of Fayette County, or \$48,637. With a focus on new industrial customers, the implementation of this project is unlikely to affect residential sewer bills.

Conclusion

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Environmental Assessment, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist in the project area, the features exist but will not be adversely affected, or the impacts will be temporary and mitigated.

This project is intended to address flows that will be generated from the Mega Manufacturing Operations site. It will provide a safe and reliable means for wastewater to be collected, transported, and effectively treated at the Rattlesnake Wastewater Treatment Plant to help protect human health and the environment in the area.

Contact information

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