



**August 12, 2024**

**Limited Environmental Review and Finding of No Significant Impact**

**City of Columbus – Franklin County  
Dublin Road Water Plant Caustic Feed Improvements  
Loan number: FS390274-0410**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a water treatment plant improvement project in Columbus which the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency intends to finance through its Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) below-market interest rate revolving loan program. The LER describes the project, its costs, and expected environmental benefits. Making available this LER 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 WSRLA program review and approval process. We have concluded that the proposed project should not result in significant adverse environmental impacts. This project's relatively narrow scope and lack of environmental impacts qualifies it for the LER rather than a more comprehensive Environmental Assessment. More information can be obtained by calling or writing the person named at the end of the attached LER.

Upon issuance of this Finding of No Significant Impact (FNSI) determination, award of funds may proceed without further environmental review or public comment unless new information shows that environmental conditions of the proposed project have changed significantly.

Sincerely,

*Steve Malone* , for

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Project: Dublin Road Water Plant Caustic Feed Improvements

Applicant: City of Columbus  
910 Dublin Road  
Columbus, Ohio 43215

Loan Number: FS390274-0410

### **Project Summary**

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$2,554,866 from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the replacement of aging and deteriorated water treatment equipment including storage and feed capabilities for delivering liquid caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) at the Dublin Road Water Plant (DRWP). All improvements will be made within the footprint of the existing water treatment plant on city-owned property and are not expected to have any adverse environmental impacts. This project is part of the city's ongoing program to upgrade its treatment facilities to provide safe, reliable water to its approximately 1.2 million customers.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

Columbus operates three large interconnected municipal water treatment plants: Hap Cremean Water Plant (HCWP), Dublin Road Water Plant (DRWP), and Parsons Avenue Water Plant (PAWP). These plants collectively supply potable water to Columbus and the central Ohio metropolitan areas. The DRWP was constructed between 1967-1975 and is a surface water treatment plant utilizing Scioto River as its water source. It is rated for a maximum daily flow of 80 million gallons per day (MGD) and serves approximately 400,000 customers within a service area consisting of downtown Columbus, and western and southwestern Franklin County.

The DRWP uses liquid caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) in their water treatment process for pH control of the finished water. The location of the existing caustic feed bulk and day tanks is not efficient nor convenient to the needs of the plant to effectively deliver the caustic soda to the locations necessary to control the pH adjustments post-filtration for the finished water.

### **Project Description**

The improvements will provide storage and feed capabilities to deliver liquid caustic soda (sodium hydroxide) to multiple post-filtration application points for pH adjustment of the filtered water. Improvements will include bulk storage, day tank storage, flow metering, piping, valving, electrical, and instrumentation and controls. A connection to the existing caustic storage and feed system will be established in order to supply the new caustic day tanks. The new caustic day tanks will be located within an unused area in the Administration and Chemical Building. Caustic soda will be fed by pumping to post-filtration application points. The project will improve the operability and reduce maintenance requirements associated with caustic storage and feed.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing water treatment plant, thereby minimizing effects on environmental resources. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control erosion and sedimentation and minimize the creation of dust.

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

## **Implementation**

### *Project Costs*

Columbus plans to borrow \$2,554,866 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$396,578 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.72%, compared to the market rate of 3.97%. WSRLA interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

### *Local Economy*

The current annual Columbus residential water bill is approximately \$547. Projected residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated water projects are expected to increase to approximately \$622, or 1.1% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$58,575.

By using WSRLA financing for this project, Columbus has minimized the economic impact on customers.

### *Project Schedule*

The anticipated loan award will occur in August 2024. Construction is expected to be completed by April 2025.

## **Public Participation**

A public notice was posted on the City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage detailing the proposed improvements to the Dublin Road Water Plant and contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns. Public participation is limited since construction will occur entirely within the secure area of the DRWP and will not impact the general public.

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 Limited Environmental Review (LER) is available from the project contact named below.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed project meets the criteria for an LER; namely, it involves rehabilitation of existing treatment works. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

**Has no significant environmental effect, no effect on high-value environmental resources, and does not require extensive specific impact mitigation.**

Construction for the project is limited to the previously disturbed footprint of the existing water treatment plant, which lacks important environmental features. Standard construction best

management practices will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety.

**Is cost effective and not controversial.**

Evaluation of alternatives determined that relocation and replacement of deteriorated equipment was more cost effective than rehabilitation which may require continued maintenance in the future. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that will maintain a treatment facility to ensure a continuous supply of potable drinking water to customers.

**Does not create a new, or relocate an existing, discharge to surface or ground waters; will not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters; will not significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source; will not result in substantial increases in the volume of discharge or the loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters; and will not provide capacity to serve a population substantially greater than the existing population.**

This project involves the replacement of structural components within the footprint of the existing treatment plant. The project will not affect water withdrawals or discharges, nor serve a greater population.

Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this Limited Environmental Review, 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.

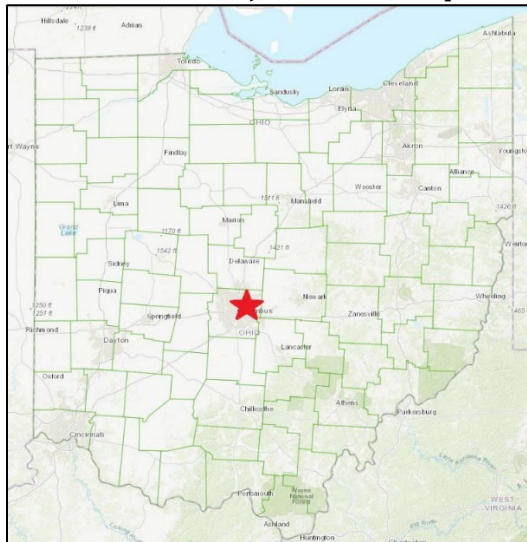
This project will improve the water treatment plant's ability to meet water supply needs and ensure a continuous supply of potable water to customers.

**Contact Information**

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Ohio EPA-DEFA  
P.O. Box 1049  
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**Exhibit 1: Project location map**



**Exhibit 2: Project location map**

