



**Mike DeWine**, Governor  
**Jon Husted**, Lt. Governor  
**Anne M. Vogel**, Director

**March 15, 2023**

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

**City of Columbus – Franklin County  
Residuals Turnkey Dewatering Services  
Loan number: FS390274-0436**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for the design and construction of a turnkey residuals dewatering facility 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,

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Project: Residuals Turnkey Dewatering Services

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

Loan Number: FS390274-0436

### **Project Summary**

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested funding from the Ohio Water Supply Revolving Loan Account (WSRLA) for the design and construction of a turnkey residuals dewatering facility to thicken, dewater, store, and handle all or some of the residuals produced by the Dublin Road Water Plant and Hap Cremean Water Plant for beneficial reuse.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

The City of 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 treat and supply clean water to Columbus and a large part of Franklin County for customer potable water uses. As a part of the drinking water treatment process, several water treatment residuals products, including alum and lime, are generated that require handling, management, and beneficial use or disposal.

Columbus currently transfers the liquid residuals from HCWP and DRWP to the McKinley Avenue Quarry (MAQ) for disposal via sludge lines. Historically, Columbus has also hauled and disposed residuals from the PAWP lagoons to the MAQ. Based on studies performed by the city and its consultants, the MAQ has limited remaining service life under the current disposal rates of residuals.

Due to limited storage volume remaining at the MAQ, the city desires to provide long-term beneficial use outlets for the treatment residuals to reduce the long-term reliance on MAQ. The water treatment residuals must be dewatered to reduce the volume prior to hauling to beneficial reuse outlets. The city does not currently have a dewatering facility to handle them.

### **Project Description**

Columbus is seeking to improve the sustainability of its current residuals management methods by moving away from a disposal-based operation to one that is entirely, or substantially, based on beneficial use. This project is an effort to reduce the city's long-term reliance on utilizing the MAQ for residuals disposal.

This project will entail both the design and construction of a new dewatering and handling facility at the McKinley Avenue Quarry property needed to thicken, dewater, store, and handle residuals prior

to sending it to beneficial use outlets.

The construction footprint for this project will remain primarily within the previously disturbed area near the McKinley Avenue Quarry property. The contractor is responsible for best management practices to control dust, erosion, and sedimentation, and shall perform all required tree clearing during seasonal clearing timeframes so as to protect endangered bat species.

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

## **Implementation**

### *Project Costs*

Columbus plans to borrow \$46,621,000 from the WSRLA. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save approximately \$7,153,073 by using WSRLA dollars at the standard rate of 2.49%, compared to the market rate of 3.74%. Interest rates are set monthly and may change for the requested March loan award.

### *Local Economy*

The current Columbus annual residential water bill is approximately \$544. Projected annual residential water bills with the implementation of this and other associated projects are expected to increase to approximately \$665, or 1.2% of median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$54,902.

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

### *Project Schedule*

The anticipated loan award will occur in March 2023. Design is expected to begin in spring 2023 with construction commencing fall 2023 and completing in 2026.

## **Public Participation**

Public notices were posted on the City of Columbus's Public Utilities webpage which detailed the proposed construction, and contact information is provided for any public questions or concerns.

Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on its web page: <https://epa.ohio.gov/wps/portal/gov/epa/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements> and will provide it upon request to interested parties. Information supporting this Limited Environmental Review is available from the project contact named below.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed project meets the criteria for a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action which involves improvements only to residuals from an existing water treatment system. Furthermore, the project meets the other qualifying criteria for an LER; specifically, the proposed project:

*Will have no significant environmental effect, will have no effect on high-value environmental resources, and will not require extensive specific impact mitigation.*

The project includes construction of a turnkey residuals dewatering facility within the previously

disturbed property of McKinley Avenue Quarry; therefore, areas lacking important environmental features. No stream crossings or in-wetland work are scheduled to occur, and there will be no construction within prime farmland or within the floodplain. If necessary, tree clearing is to occur within seasonal clearing dates to protect endangered bat species located in the area. The contractor is responsible for dust control, sedimentation, and erosion control, and maintenance of traffic during construction.

*Is cost effective and not controversial.*

The proposed project is cost effective as this is the only alternative to address the increasing volume of water treatment residuals in storage. Ohio EPA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project that continues to improve the sustainability of Columbus' water treatment process and will ultimately contribute towards the beneficial reuse of water treatment residual waste.

*Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, does not create a new source of water withdrawals from either surface or ground waters, or significantly increase the amount of water withdrawn from an existing water source, or substantially increase the volume of discharge or loading of pollutants from an existing source or from new facilities to receiving waters.*

This project involves the construction of a residuals dewatering system to process residual waste creating by two of Columbus' water treatment plants. It does not otherwise alter Columbus's public water system (withdrawal, treatment, distribution, or amount of usage of potable water).

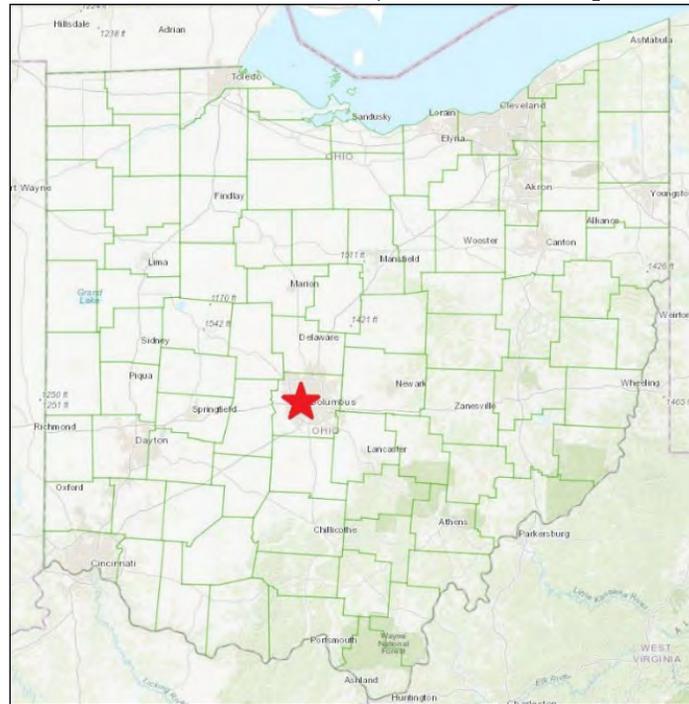
Based upon Ohio EPA's review of the planning information and the materials presented in this LER, we have concluded that there will be no significant adverse impacts from the proposed project as it relates to the environmental features discussed previously. This is because these features do not exist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

This project is part of Columbus' continuing program to upgrade its treatment facilities to provide efficient, cost-effective, sustainable operations, and a reliable supply of potable water to its approximately 1.2 million customers.

**Contact information**

Kristin Parrish  
Ohio EPA-DEFA  
P.O. Box 1049  
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049  
[kristin.parrish@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:kristin.parrish@epa.ohio.gov)

**Exhibit 1: Project location map**



**Exhibit 2: Project location map**

