



**May 2, 2024**

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

**City of Columbus – Franklin County  
SWWTP EAC HVAC & Air Purification  
Loan number: CS390274-0421**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a HVAC equipment replacement project in Columbus 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 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 WPCLF 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,

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

Kathleen Courtright, Assistant Chief  
Division of Environmental and Financial Assistance

Attachment

## LIMITED ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

### **Project Identification**

Project: SWWTP EAC HVAC & Air Purification

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

Loan Number: CS390274-0421

### **Project Summary**

The City of Columbus in Franklin County has requested \$3,525,868 from the Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) for the replacement of heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment in the Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant East Aeration Control Building. Construction will take place within the confines of the existing plant and is not expected to cause adverse environmental impacts.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

Southerly Wastewater Treatment Plant (SWWTP) is one of two large municipal wastewater treatment plants operated by the City of Columbus.

Equipment within the plant's East Aeration Control (EAC) building removes hydrogen sulfide from the air in addition to providing the building with heating and cooling. Equipment located on the building's roof, within the basement/pipe gallery, and within the mechanical room on the mezzanine level was evaluated and it was determined that the majority has already exceeded its expected service life as it has been in place for more than 30 years.

### **Project Description**

In order to ensure safe continued operation of the SWWTP, new equipment with similar performance as the existing equipment will be provided for airflow, heating, cooling, and removal of hydrogen sulfide within the EAC. Three locations within the building were addressed:

- Roof: Replacement of the HVAC system for the building will include replacement of five exhaust fans on the roof and removal of three condensing units from the roof. Three new condensing units will be installed on concrete pads at grade.
- Basement: All existing HVAC units and their associated air purification units in the basement will be replaced and updated with newer models. The amount of airflow shall be revised to be more practical and to accommodate the served area more efficiently.
- Mechanical Room: All existing HVAC units and their associated air purification units in the mechanical room will be replaced. All equipment concrete pads in the mechanical room will be replaced to fit new unit sizes and locations and nearby floor drains will be relocated accordingly. The new equipment will also improve the overall building air quality while reducing the number of units needed in critical space such as the mechanical room.

The construction footprint for this project will remain within the confines of the existing wastewater 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 during construction.

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

## **Implementation**

### *Project Costs*

Columbus plans to borrow \$3,525,868 from the WPCLF. During the 20-year loan period, Columbus will save \$544,006 by using WPCLF dollars at the standard rate of 2.60%, compared to the market rate of 3.85%. WPCLF interest rates are set monthly and may change for a later loan award.

### *Local Economy*

The current Columbus residential sewer bill is approximately \$647 per year. Projected residential sewer bills with the implementation of this and other associated wastewater projects are expected to increase to approximately \$866 per year, or 1.5% of the median household income (MHI) of Columbus, which is \$58,575.

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

### *Project Schedule*

The anticipated loan award will occur in May 2024. Construction will start following the loan award and is expected to be completed by July 2025.

## **Public Participation**

The City of Columbus' Public Utilities webpage details proposed Capital Improvement Projects within the Division of Sewerage & Drainage. 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/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 a Limited Environmental Review (LER); namely, it is an action for the replacement 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 Southerly WWTP, which lacks important environmental features. Standard construction best management practices will be required to control dust, sediment runoff, noise, and maintain safety. Although

construction will occur within the floodplain, no new structures will be installed above the existing grade and the contractor will commit to take all necessary precautions to protect project work and equipment against flooding occurrences.

**Is cost effective and not controversial.**

The proposed project is cost effective as it involves seeking replacements to existing equipment that is beyond its useful service life. Operation and maintenance costs to existing equipment will decrease at the completion of this project from the decrease in required labor and maintenance. DEFA is unaware of any specific opposition to or controversy about this project.

**Does not create a new, or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, and 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 removal and replacement of equipment within the footprint of the existing treatment plant. The project will not increase wastewater discharges, nor provide capacity to serve a greater population. There will be no change in pollutant loading.

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 provide necessary improvements to the HVAC system at Southerly WWTP to allow for safe continued operation of Columbus’ wastewater treatment.

**Contact Information**

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**Exhibit 1: Project location map**



**Exhibit 2: Project location map**

