

STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

Manisha Juthani, MD
Commissioner



Ned Lamont
Governor
Susan Bysiewicz
Lt. Governor

Drinking Water Section

Environmental Assessment Justification for Categorical Exclusion

A. Project Identification

PWS Name: Aquarion Water Co. of CT
Town: New Fairfield
PWSID: CT0910011 & CT0910031
DWSRF No.: SFY 23-46
Project Name: PFAS Treatment Project - Renda, Biggs Wellfields at Ball Pond System and Oakwood Acres
Project Location: 18 Karen Dr., 4 Biggs Ave., & 12 Renda St., New Fairfield, CT

B. Summary of Environmental Review

August 21, 2023

The environmental aspects of this project have been reviewed in accordance with State and Federal regulations. The findings of the environmental review are summarized below.

1. **Project Description**

Aquarion Water Company (AWC) proposes to implement granular activated carbon (GAC) systems for PFAS Treatment at the Renda and Biggs Well Stations in their Ball Pond System, as well as at the Oakwook Acres Well Station in their Oakwood Acres System. All of the above noted well stations are located in New Fairfield, CT. The purpose of these treatment installations is to remove PFAS contamination in the groundwater and improve the reliability of these systems. Sampling for PFAS has indicated that combined PFAS levels are approximately 43 ng/L at the Oakwood Acres wells, 28 ng/L at the Renda wells and 35 ng/L at the Biggs wells. Associated site and safety improvements are also proposed to be included in the project.

For the Renda and Biggs stations, new 16-foot x 22-foot buildings will be constructed near the existing facilities to house the proposed PFAS treatment equipment. The existing buildings and well station facilities are to be kept in place to maintain current operations. For the Oakwood Acres station, the existing building is large enough house the new PFAS treatment equipment in addition to the existing well station facilities.

2. **Justification for Categorical Exclusion from Connecticut Environmental Policy Act Requirements**



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The DPH has performed a review of the project under the Environmental Classification Document (ECD) for Connecticut state agencies and determined that this project is well defined and sufficiently limited in scope to qualify as a Category IV project consisting of minor renovations to existing facilities. Based on this determination a review pursuant to the Connecticut Environmental Policy Act (CEPA) is not warranted.

The public water system will be required to obtain any necessary local permits, as applicable. Copies of all required permits must be submitted to the DPH prior to any DWSRF funds being dispersed.

The project area is not within an identified flood plain.

It is not reasonable to expect any adverse impact to the natural diversity of the surrounding area as the project areas are not within any current Natural Diversity Database Areas.

Although it is not expected that anything of archeological significance will be found, the DPH requires the contract language to include procedures for notifying appropriate entities, should anything of significance be found during construction.

3. Justification for Categorical Exclusion from National Environmental Policy Act Requirements

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. Part 6, Procedures for Implementing the Requirements of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the DPH has reviewed the proposed scope of work submitted by the Aquarion Water Co. of CT in its application for DWSRF assistance. The result of this review indicates that there are no environmental concerns with this project, as discussed below:

- a. With respect to the criteria set forth in 40 CFR Part 6, the proposed project involves actions that are consistent with the eligibility for granting a Categorical Exclusion pursuant to 40 CFR Part 6.204 (a)(1)(ii). Specifically, the project actions are related to existing infrastructure systems that involve minor upgrading, and rehabilitation of the existing system and system components.
- b. With respect to the criteria set forth in 40 CFR Part 6.204 (b) for not granting a Categorical Exclusion:
 - i. The proposed action is not known or expected to have potentially significant impacts on the quality of the human environment either individually or cumulatively over time;
 - ii. The proposed action is not known or expected to have any adverse human health or environmental effects on any community;
 - iii. The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect federally listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat;
 - iv. The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect any national natural landmarks;
 - v. The proposed action is not known or expected to significantly affect any natural resource areas (e.g. flood plains, wetlands, farmlands, or aquifer recharge zones);

- vi. The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant adverse air quality effects;
- vii. The proposed action is not known or expected to have any effects on land use or growth patterns; and
- viii. The proposed action is not known or expected to cause significant public controversy.
- ix. The proposed action is not known or expected to be associated with providing financial assistance to a federal agency through an interagency agreement for a project that is known or expected to have potentially significant environmental impacts.
- x. The proposed action is not known or expected to conflict with federal, state or local government, or federally-recognized Indian tribe environmental, resource-protection, or land-use laws or regulations.

C. Conclusion

Based on the DPH's review, none of the NEPA criteria which would result in the denial of a Categorical Exclusion are met. The proposed action is not known or expected to have any adverse impact on the quality of the human environment. The action will provide a direct public health benefit to residents served by the Aquarion Water Co. of CT's public water system by installing treatment to address PFAS contamination in multiple well stations throughout New Fairfield, CT. Furthermore, the Department has reviewed the action against the ECD for Connecticut state agencies and determined it is a Category IV action for which a review under the CEPA is not warranted. As a result, the proposed action has met the criteria to be categorically excluded from further NEPA or CEPA review.

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