



**January 18, 2024**

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

**City of Martins Ferry – Belmont County  
Sanitary Force Main Extension  
Loan number: CS390576-0009**

The attached Limited Environmental Review (LER) is for a sanitary sewer project in Martins Ferry 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: Sanitary Force Main Extension

Applicant: City of Martins Ferry  
35 S. Fifth St.  
Martins Ferry, Ohio 43935

Loan Number: CS390576-0009



**Figure 1. Belmont County**

### **Project Summary**

The City of Martins Ferry, in Belmont County (Figure 1), has requested funding from the Ohio Water Pollution Control Loan Fund (WPCLF) to help finance the Sanitary Force Main Extension project. This project involves installation of a new sanitary force main beneath State Route (SR) 7 to correct an existing section of sewer that has collapsed. The total cost of the project is estimated to be \$282,444. Martins Ferry qualifies for WPCLF principal forgiveness funding up to \$198,384 for use towards the project. Loan funding in the form of principal forgiveness does not need to be repaid.

### **History & Existing Conditions**

The Martins Ferry Sewer Department is responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of all sanitary and stormwater collection within the city. Martins Ferry does not operate a wastewater treatment plant; instead, a separate entity, Eastern Ohio Regional Wastewater Authority (EORWA), accepts and treats wastewater generated by Martins Ferry. EORWA also provides wastewater treatment for the villages of Bellaire, Brookside, and Bridgeport.

Currently, a section of sanitary force main that runs parallel to SR 7 is collapsed, interrupting regular service for an upstream business, Turf Care Supply. Martins Ferry replaced a portion of the force main at the suspected location of the collapse, from a northern pump station to a point south of Glens Run. This did not solve the issue and the city has since been implementing a temporary solution involving a holding tank. A holding tank stores upstream flows, which are later transferred via a pump truck to the nearest gravity sewer. Upkeep of the holding tank is necessary to prevent the overflow of sanitary flow to nearby waterways such as Glens Run and the Ohio River. This temporary solution is costly and inefficient.

Martins Ferry intends to connect the recently installed section of force main on the eastern side of SR 7 to gravity sanitary sewer on the western side of SR 7 by installing a new force main beneath the road and adjacent railways. This alternative was determined to be less invasive, time consuming, and costly than replacing the remaining 1,300 feet of original force main that wasn't replaced during Martins Ferry's previous repair.

## **Project Description**

Martins Ferry will install approximately 330 feet of 6-inch high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe to connect the portion of functioning force main to an existing EORWA manhole and gravity sewer (Figure 2). The new force main will be installed beneath Wheeling and Lake Erie Railroad Company and Norfolk Southern Railroad railways, SR 7, and Valley Drive using jack and bore. This process will involve excavating a launching pit on the eastern side of the railways and a receiving pit on the western side of Valley Drive. Both pits are expected to be roughly 30 feet by 10 feet. A 12-inch steel casing will simultaneously be installed while boring from the launching pit to the receiving pit. Once the steel casing is in place, the new force main will be run through the casing and connections made between the existing force main, new force main, and existing manhole and gravity sewer. Disturbed surfaces will be restored following completion of construction.

Completion of this work will restore normal sanitary sewer service for 90 individuals of Turf Care Supplies served by this force main, allowing Martins Ferry to abandon operation of the temporary holding tank solution.

## **Implementation**

The total estimated cost of the project is \$282,444. Martins Ferry is eligible to receive up to \$198,384 in principal forgiveness funding from the Ohio WPCLF for use towards this project. Principal forgiveness functions much like a grant in which the eligible capital costs of a project are reduced by the principal forgiveness amount, thereby eliminating a portion of the principal, and interest, that the borrower must repay. Martins Ferry intends to only accept funding from the WPCLF up to the amount of principal forgiveness awarded. Assuming a full award of the mentioned principal forgiveness funding, borrowing this amount in WPCLF monies could save Martins Ferry roughly \$299,000 compared to a 20-year loan at the current market rate of 4.33 percent. Martins Ferry will cover the remainder of the project cost using local funds.

The debt associated with this project will be recovered from monthly user charges. Customers served by Martins Ferry are charged a monthly sewer maintenance fee of \$15.86 and a sewer debt fee of \$4.00. Customers receive a separate bill for wastewater treatment from EORWA that is based on water usage. Based on EORWA's current rates, a residential customer with a monthly water usage of 4,000 gallons pays roughly \$35. In total, residents served by Martins Ferry and EORWA have an annual sewer bill of \$663. This represents 1.61 percent of the median household income for Martins Ferry (MHI; \$41,005) and is higher than the Ohio average annual residential sewer bill of \$490.

Construction has begun and is expected to take four months to complete.

## **Public Participation**

Martins Ferry City Council holds regular meetings the first and third Wednesdays of every month and provides information regarding meeting times and dates, location, as well as meeting minutes, on the city's website. This project, including the ordinance authorizing the mayor to apply for, accept, and enter into a WPCLF agreement with Ohio EPA, was discussed at multiple meetings.

Ohio EPA is unaware of significant controversy about or opposition to the project. Ohio EPA will make a copy of this document available to the public on the following webpage and will provide it upon request:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/environmental-financial-assistance/announcements>.

## **Conclusion**

The proposed project meets the criteria for a LER; namely, it is an action within an existing public wastewater system, which involves improvements to failed sanitary sewer. 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 require no specific impact mitigation.** The project is within the range of several state and federally listed threatened and endangered bat species (Indiana bat, northern long-eared bat, tricolored bat, and little brown bat). During summer months these species roost in trees with loose and exfoliating bark, crevices and cavities, and within leaf clusters. The area of the launching pit is a mostly cleared area containing some trees, shrubs, and herbaceous vegetation. Excavation of the launching pit may require some tree removal. Martins Ferry will restrict tree clearing, if determined necessary, to between October 1 and March 31, as recommended by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, for the protection of listed threatened and endangered bat species.

Construction falls within the source water assessment and protection area for the Martins Ferry public water system. The contractor will be required to implement best management practices to prevent discharge of pollutants to ground water and surface water resources. Likewise, the contractor will be responsible for implementing all other applicable standard best management practices to limit erosion, sediment, noise, dust, traffic disruptions, and like factors throughout the duration of construction.

The locations of construction otherwise contain no sensitive, unique, or valuable environmental resources. For this reason and because of the measures that will be taken, no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts are expected.

**Is cost effective.** The proposed alternative is less costly and more time efficient than replacing the remaining extent of force main that is crushed, which would entail replacing 1,300 feet of force main. The proposed alternative is also much less costly and time consuming and poses far less risk to the environment than the temporary holding tank solution currently in operation.

**Is not a controversial action.** The nature of the project is such that there will be no significant short-term or long-term adverse impacts to residents or the environment, and no significant opposition to the project has been reported.

**Does not create a new or relocate an existing discharge to surface or ground waters, 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.** The proposed project is intended to restore proper sanitary sewer service to existing Martins Ferry customers and will otherwise have no impact on Martins Ferry's sanitary sewer system or EORWA's wastewater treatment system (e.g., collection, conveyance, treatment, discharge).

To conclude, Martins Ferry's proposed project is sufficiently limited in scope and meets all applicable criteria to warrant an LER. The planning review of this project identified no potentially short-term or long-term adverse impacts on the quality of the human environment and on sensitive resources (surface waters, coastal zones, floodplains, wetlands, state-designated scenic and recreational rivers, prime and unique agriculture lands, aquifer recharge zones, archaeological and historically

significant sites, threatened and endangered species, and state and federal wildlife areas). Overall, the proposed project is expected to eliminate the temporary holding tank solution and allow Martins Ferry to provide sanitary sewer service to customers in a safe, efficient, and cost-effective manner.

**Contact Information**

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**Figure 2. Location map for the launching and receiving pits and force main**